Dance As A Physical Activity: Integration of Movement Aesthetics, Exercise, And Body Health

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Abstract

Dance has been understood only as one of the performing arts that is packaged in the form of cultural expression and movement aesthetics, but in its development dance also has a very strong physical dimension. This article aims to examine dance not only as a performing art, but as a physical activity through the integration of movement aesthetics, sports principles, and body health. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method, with data sources in the form of books, journal articles, and scientific publications relevant to dance, physical activity, sports, and health. The results of the study show that dance can meet the criteria as a physical activity because it involves structured, repetitive body movements and requires energy expenditure. Dance has similarities with sports in terms of training principles, such as intensity, duration, and frequency, and provides benefits for physical fitness, cardiovascular health, flexibility, and body balance, because in dance it can also be measured through physiological indicators. Physiologically, there is a relationship between dance, exercise and body health, this can be seen through the physical measurement of dancers. Therefore, dance and sports have similar functions, but the difference is how to actualize their sense of aesthetics and soulfulness. In addition, dance also contributes to mental and emotional health through aesthetic elements and movement expression. Thus, dance art can be understood as a holistic physical activity and has the potential to be developed as an alternative sport that supports a healthy lifestyle.

Keywords: *dance art, physical activity, sports, body health, movement aesthetics.*

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INTRODUCTION

Dance art has been understood as a form of cultural expression that highlights the beauty of movement, rhythm, and symbolic meaning that lives in society. Dance not only functions as a medium of entertainment or aesthetic performance, but also as a means of nonverbal communication that represents the social, spiritual, and identity values of a community. However, in its development, dance art began to be viewed from a broader perspective, not only as a work of art, but also as a physical activity that involves intense and structured bodily work (Ulfa & Slamet, 2025).

Dance art is a form of human expression that is manifested through rhythmic, structured, and meaningful gestures. Movement in dance does not arise spontaneously, but is built through the processing of elements of space, time, and energy so as to produce aesthetic unity. In the context of culture, dance art functions as a nonverbal communication medium that conveys values, symbols, and social identity of a society. Therefore, dance art is not only understood as an artistic activity, but also as a bodily practice that involves physical awareness, motor control, and mastery of movement techniques (Lubis & Siregar, 2025).

In addition to aesthetic aspects, dance requires intense physical involvement. Dancers are required to have the ability to control their posture, maintain balance, and coordinate their movements in harmony with the rhythm of music. The continuous process of dance practice shows that dance is an activity that requires physical readiness and discipline in practice, so it indirectly places dance as an activity that has a strong physical dimension.

As an activity that requires coordination, balance, strength, flexibility, and endurance, dance has characteristics that are in line with the principles of sport. Each series of dance movements involves muscle contraction and relaxation, breathing regulation, and energy control that are carried out repeatedly and continuously (Mansur et al., 2025). In practice, dancers undergo a systematic training process, starting from warm-up, mastering techniques, to cooling-down, which indirectly reflects the pattern of physical exercise in sports.

On the other hand, increasing public awareness of the importance of body health encourages the search for forms of physical activity that are not only healthy, but also fun and meaningful. The art of dance offers an alternative to physical activity that combines elements of physical fitness with aesthetic and emotional satisfaction. Through dynamic and expressive movements, dance has the potential to improve cardiovascular health, flexibility, motor coordination, and mental health, thereby contributing to the overall well-being of the body.

Based on this, it is important to examine dance as a physical activity that integrates movement aesthetics, exercise, and body health. This study is expected to broaden the understanding of the position of dance in a multidisciplinary context, while affirming that dance not only plays a role in the realm of culture and performing arts, but also has a real contribution in supporting an active and healthy lifestyle.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research is to study and analyze the concept of dance as a physical activity through the integration of aesthetic perspectives of movement, exercise, and body health based on theoretical studies and previous research results (Adlini et al., 2022). The literature study method allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of concepts, theories, and scientific findings relevant to the research topic.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained from various literatures, such as textbooks, scientific journal articles, seminar proceedings, and other scientific publications related to dance, physical activity, sports, and health. The literature used was selected selectively by considering the relevance, credibility of the source, and the novelty of the publication, so that the data analyzed had a strong academic foundation. The data collection technique was carried out through searching and grouping literature that discussed the concept of dance, the principles of physical activity and sports, and the benefits of movement activities on body health. The literature that has been collected is then classified based on the theme of the study, thus facilitating the process of analysis and synthesis between concepts. This stage aims to find the relationship and suitability between dance and sports principles and their implications for body health.

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive-analytical analysis techniques, namely by describing the main concepts obtained from the literature, then critically analyzing the relationship and integration between these concepts. The results of the analysis were presented in the form of a systematic narrative description to provide a comprehensive picture of dance as a physical activity that has aesthetic value, sports functions, and health benefits.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of various literature show that dance art can conceptually and practically be categorized as physical activity. The following is a review:

The Art of Dance in a Physiological Context

From a physiological point of view, the practice of dance has a direct impact on improving physical fitness. Dance movements performed continuously can increase cardiovascular capacity through the regulation of breathing and a stable heart rate. In addition, dance exercises also contribute to improving joint flexibility and muscle elasticity because they involve stretching and stretching movements. Thus, dance has functional equivalence with aerobic exercise and flexibility exercises that are commonly recommended in fitness programs.

The discussion of dance as a sport becomes increasingly relevant when it is associated with the principles of physical exercise. Dance practice is carried out in a structured manner by paying attention to the intensity, duration, and frequency of exercise. Professional and amateur dancers generally undergo regular exercises aimed at improving technical skills while maintaining the

physical condition of the body. This pattern of training is in line with the principles of overload and progressivity in sports, where the body gradually adapts to the increased training load. Therefore, dance art not only functions as a means of artistic expression, but also as a medium for the formation of planned physical fitness (Nasution et al., 2025).

The advantage of dance art compared to conventional sports lies in the aesthetic aspect of movement that accompanies it. Aesthetics in dance encourage dancers to perform movements with precision, harmony, and high body control. This element of movement beauty plays an important role in increasing body awareness, which has a positive impact on the overall quality of movement. In the context of sports, body awareness is an important factor to prevent injuries and increase movement efficiency, so dance aesthetics actually strengthen the physical function of the activity.

In addition to the physical aspect, the results of the study also show that dance makes a significant contribution to mental and emotional health. Dancing activities allow individuals to channel emotions through movement, thus helping to reduce psychological stress and stress. The involvement of music, rhythm, and self-expression in dance creates a fun and motivating experience, which can increase the individual's consistency in performing physical activities. This is the advantage of dance as an alternative sport, because the factors of pleasure and personal meaning often determine the sustainability of physical activity in the long term.

In social and cultural terms, dance also has added value that is not found in most sports. Dance is often performed in groups, both in rehearsals and performances, thus encouraging social interaction and cooperation. These interactions contribute to the social and emotional health of individuals, which ultimately positively impacts overall well-being (Rizaldi et al., 2024). Thus, dance can be understood as a physical activity that not only nourishes the body, but also strengthens social relationships and cultural identity.

Further discussion shows that dance has great potential to be integrated into health and physical education programs. In the world of education, dance can be an effective learning medium to improve physical fitness while instilling aesthetic and cultural values. Meanwhile, in the health sector, dance can be used as a promotive and preventive activity that encourages people to move actively without feeling burdened by rigid sports concepts. The flexibility of dance allows for the adaptation of movements according to age, physical condition, and individual needs, including for children, adults, and the elderly.

Physical Activity and Sports

Physical activity is defined as any body movement that is produced by skeletal muscles and requires energy expenditure. Physical activity encompasses various forms of activity, ranging from daily activities to structured exercises aimed at improving physical fitness. Exercise is a part of physical activity that is carried out systematically, planned, and repetitive with a specific goal, such as improving health, fitness, or physical achievement (Wicaksono & Handoko, 2020).

Physical fitness in a person is greatly influenced by the physical condition performed. More precisely, physiological fitness is translated into physical fitness. This capacity can be able to form physiological-based physical function skills (Giriwijoyo & Sidik, 2010). In sports, there are basic principles that must be considered, such as intensity, duration, frequency, and continuity of exercise. These principles aim to ensure that the physical activities carried out have a positive impact on the body. In addition to aiming for a healthy life, motor development, physical skills, awareness of values (attitude, mental health, emotional, spiritual, and social) (Sinuraya & Borus, 2020).

If associated with dance, dance practice has similarities with sports because it is done regularly, involves certain techniques, and requires continuous physical and mental mastery. This is according to the statement from Maulida (2013) that dancing is a physical activity that requires coordination of body parts, endurance, and flexibility. Dancers need practice to strengthen memorization, movement techniques and skills, as well as to increase body endurance and train the organs needed to move body parts. Dancers not only have good movement techniques, but also need body endurance to be able to present dance well.

So it can be implied that the physical activity of dancers and sports has the same concept when viewed from several perspectives. It can be said that human activities in carrying out activities such as work, exercise, and art (dance arts), when viewed from the output, are both gestures (locomotor) that can be studied in the field of health. Between the body, movement, and health are a unit that supports each other in human activities in daily life.

Concept of Body Health

Body health is not only defined as a condition free from disease, but also as a state of physical well-being that allows a person to carry out daily activities optimally. Physical health is closely related to physical fitness, which includes cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination of movements. Maintaining body health requires physical activity that is carried out regularly and according to individual abilities. According to Ardika & Pardijono (2015), when a person can maintain daily body health by doing physical activities to improve physical quality and stay healthy and fit by walking, jogging, gymnastics, and even doing simple movements while working.

Proper physical activity can improve the function of body organs, improve the circulatory system, and help maintain posture and body stability. In addition, physical activity also contributes to mental health by reducing stress and improving mood. Therefore, activities that combine physical and expressive elements, such as dance, show great potential in supporting overall body health (Hermawan et al., 2024). When a person performs movement activities such as dance movements, as well as sports movements, it turns out to have a very good effect on the health of the dancer's body itself. The benefits of health and fitness for dancers can be felt in the short and long term in the future.

It can be said that human activities in carrying out activities such as work, sports, and art (dance), when viewed from the output, are both bodily movements (locomotor) that can be studied in the field of health. Between the body, movement, and health is a unit that supports each other in human activities in daily life (Syaifuddin, 2011). The scope of health is studied about the effects of sports activities on the health of the human body, such as fitness, fatigue, and injuries. If it is associated with the art of dance, it can be seen from the form of locomotor movement (gross motor) that arises when the process of performing student movement activities in dancing such as changing places, jumping, tiptoeing, running around, spinning and others.

Body health in the concept of dance activities can be concluded that it can have a good impact on physical fitness. In menstruation activities that are carried out regularly, a person can feel their own impact on the health of their body. Because in the productivity carried out sports and dance movements can both have an effect on the perpetrator if it is done intensely, routinely, and sustainably.

The Relationship of Dance with Sports and Health

Dance movements not only involve the free movement of limbs, but are arranged in a systematic and repetitive pattern, thus requiring significant energy expenditure. Some types of dance, both traditional and modern, require a fairly high intensity of movement, such as jumps, turns, and rapid changes in body level. These activities activate various major muscle groups, including the legs, arms, back, and core muscles, which play an important role in supporting physical strength and endurance (Sirait et al., 2025).

According to Manguensong and Yanuartati (2020), the development of *dance science* is used by dance scientists and medical scientists to analyze dance movement techniques with a medical science approach. Positivistic science is in contrast to traditional Indonesian dance art which is thick with ethnic 'feelings'. This is the science of kinesiology that can also be used to analyze traditional dance movements without leaving the training of 'taste', so that the typical 'taste' of the dance can still be enjoyed by the audience. Not only taste, but 'Sport' is also considered in physical activity, so that dancers can process their 'body' well when dancing.

Dance has characteristics that are in line with sports activities because it involves structured, intense, and repetitive body movements. Dance movements demand the use of various muscle groups, breathing regulation, as well as energy control, which contribute to improved physical fitness. From a sports point of view, dance can be categorized as physical activities that are aerobic or anaerobic in nature, depending on the type and intensity of the dance movements.

In addition to physical benefits, dance also has a positive impact on mental and emotional health. Aesthetic and expressive elements in dance are able to provide a sense of pleasure, increase motivation to move, and strengthen an individual's attachment to physical activity itself. Thus, dance art can be understood as a form of integration between the aesthetics of movement, the principles of sport, and efforts to maintain the health of the body, which makes it a holistic and sustainable alternative to physical activity (Adi et al., 2025).

Therefore, it can be concluded that dancers must also be able to package movements well and relate them to science. Where the science conveys that dance movements are inseparable from the anatomical function of the body which is active when the dancer performs dance movements. So not only 'feelings' appear (*wirasa*) in dancers and spectators, but physical elements related to sports (*wiraga*) are also very important, this is because the body or body of the dancer as the main medium of dance itself requires fit physical abilities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the studies and discussions that have been carried out, it can be concluded that dance is a physical activity that is closely related to the principles of exercise and body health. Dance movements that are structured, repetitive, and involve various muscle groups make dance art equivalent to sports activities in improving physical fitness. In addition, dance also contains elements of systematic physical exercise, such as regulating the intensity, duration, and frequency of exercises, so that it has a positive impact on the body's physiological functions, including cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, muscle strength, and body balance. The essence of dance lies in the integration between the aesthetics of movement and physical function. The elements of beauty, expression, and meaning in dance not only enrich artistic value, but also improve the quality and awareness of movements. This integration makes dance a holistic physical activity, as it not only contributes to physical health, but also mental and emotional health. Thus, dance has great potential as an alternative to fun, meaningful, and sustainable physical activity for various groups of people.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that dance art be more optimized in the context of education, sports, and health. In the field of education, dance can be integrated into physical education learning as a form of physical activity that combines fitness and aesthetic values. In the field of health, dance art can be utilized as part of promotive and preventive programs to encourage an active and healthy lifestyle. In addition, further research is recommended to examine dance art through empirical approaches, such as experimental research or field studies, in order to directly measure the impact of dance on fitness and body health indicators more specifically.

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