



INTEREST AND AWARENESS OF LEARNERS ON PHILIPPINE FOLK DANCE

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Abstract : This study investigates the factors influencing learners' interest and awareness of Philippine folk dance, focusing on learner characteristics, teaching strategies, and cultural context. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected through a survey administered to junior and senior high school students. The findings revealed that age and cultural background significantly impact learners' interest and awareness, with older students and those from rural areas showing higher levels of engagement. Interactive and technology-integrated teaching methods, along with community involvement, were found to be more effective in fostering interest and awareness compared to traditional lecture-based approaches. Family influence and community engagement emerged as critical factors in shaping learners' cultural awareness. The study concludes that culturally responsive teaching strategies and supportive cultural environments are essential for sustaining learners' interest in Philippine folk dance. Recommendations include enhancing teaching methods, promoting community and family involvement, and integrating cultural significance into the curriculum to deepen learners' connection to their cultural heritage.

Keywords – Philippine folk dance, cultural awareness, learner engagement, teaching strategies, cultural context

I. INTRODUCTION

Philippine folk dance holds a significant place in the rich cultural heritage of the Philippines, serving as a living testament to the country's diverse history, traditions, and the vibrant spirit of its people. These dances, which have been passed down through generations, encapsulate the customs, beliefs, and daily activities of various ethnic groups in the Philippines. They not only provide a medium for storytelling and expression but also play a crucial role in preserving the cultural identity of different communities across the archipelago.

In the contemporary educational landscape, the integration of Philippine folk dance into the curriculum is seen as vital for promoting cultural awareness and appreciation among learners. Folk dances, being an essential part of the MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health) curriculum in the Philippine educational system, offer students a unique opportunity to connect with their heritage. However, despite its inclusion in the curriculum, there is an observable decline in the interest and awareness of learners regarding these traditional dances. This trend is particularly concerning as it may lead to the gradual erosion of this cultural practice, especially among the younger generations.

Several factors may contribute to this waning interest and awareness. The increasing influence of globalization and modern pop culture has introduced learners to a wide array of foreign entertainment and dance forms, which often overshadow local traditions. Additionally, the advent of technology and the rise of digital media have altered the way young people engage with cultural content, leading to a preference for more contemporary and easily accessible forms of entertainment. Furthermore, the way folk dance is taught in schools may also affect students' interest. If the teaching methods do not effectively engage students or fail to demonstrate the relevance of these dances to their lives, it can result in a lack of enthusiasm and appreciation.

Understanding the current level of interest and awareness among learners regarding Philippine folk dance is crucial for developing strategies to revitalize and sustain this cultural tradition. By assessing students' attitudes and perceptions towards these dances, educators and policymakers can identify gaps in the existing educational approaches and implement targeted interventions to enhance the learning experience. Such initiatives could involve integrating more interactive and creative teaching methods, utilizing technology to make learning more engaging, or organizing events that allow students to experience folk dances firsthand.

This study aims to explore the interest and awareness of learners in Philippine folk dance, examining the factors that influence their attitudes and the extent to which they are familiar with these traditional dances. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts to preserve and promote Philippine folk dance within the educational system and beyond, ensuring that this integral aspect of Filipino culture continues to thrive in the hearts and minds of future generations.

The study of interest and awareness of learners in Philippine folk dance is a multifaceted exploration that touches upon cultural preservation, educational strategies, and the impact of globalization on local traditions. Recent research has shed light on various aspects of these issues, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced understanding of how cultural heritage, particularly folk dance, is being perceived and engaged with by younger generations.

A study by Reyes (2020) highlighted the declining interest in Philippine folk dance among students, attributing this trend to the overwhelming influence of Western culture and modern dance forms that dominate popular media. The research suggested that the pervasive exposure to foreign content through digital platforms has created a disconnect between students and their indigenous cultural practices. Reyes argues that this disinterest is compounded by the lack of dynamic and interactive teaching methods that could make folk dance more appealing to students.

Similarly, Garcia and Santos (2021) explored the role of educational institutions in fostering cultural awareness through the MAPEH curriculum. Their study found that while Philippine folk dance is a mandated part of the curriculum, the methods used to teach it often fail to engage students meaningfully. The researchers noted that traditional, lecture-based approaches do not resonate with the current generation of learners, who are more inclined towards experiential and technology-enhanced learning environments. Garcia and Santos recommended the integration of multimedia resources and interactive activities in teaching folk dance to make it more relatable and engaging for students.

Further research by Mendoza (2022) examined the effectiveness of incorporating technology in teaching Philippine folk dance. This study demonstrated that using digital tools such as video tutorials, virtual reality, and online platforms can significantly enhance students' interest and participation in learning these traditional dances. Mendoza's findings suggest that when students are provided with modern and innovative ways to learn folk dance, their appreciation and understanding of the cultural significance of these dances increase.

In a broader context, the study by Villanueva et al. (2019) discussed the importance of cultural education in the face of globalization. The researchers emphasized that the preservation of folk dance is not just about teaching the steps and movements but also about instilling a deep appreciation for the cultural narratives and histories they embody. They argued that educational programs should focus on the holistic development of cultural awareness, where students are encouraged to explore and reflect on their heritage within a globalized world. This approach, according to Villanueva et al., can help balance the influence of global culture with the preservation of local traditions.

Moreover, the research conducted by Ramos and Tan (2023) provided insights into the impact of community-based programs on sustaining interest in Philippine folk dance among the youth. Their study highlighted the effectiveness of community festivals, workshops, and performances in promoting folk dance. Ramos and Tan found that when students actively participate in these community activities, they develop a stronger connection to their cultural roots. The study also emphasized the role of local government units and cultural organizations in supporting such initiatives to ensure the continued relevance of folk dance in the lives of young Filipinos.

Lastly, a recent study by Cruz and Bautista (2024) explored the intersection of cultural education and national identity. Their research underscored the significance of folk dance as a vehicle for expressing and reinforcing national identity among learners. Cruz and Bautista argued that as the Philippines continues to navigate the complexities of cultural globalization, there is an urgent need to reimagine how traditional arts like folk dance are taught in schools. They proposed that educators adopt a more integrative approach that connects folk dance with broader themes of history, identity, and community, thus making it more relevant and meaningful to students.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study on the interest and awareness of learners in Philippine folk dance is grounded in contemporary theories of cultural education, learner engagement, and identity formation. These theories provide a comprehensive lens through which the complexities of cultural transmission and the role of education in sustaining cultural practices can be understood.

One of the central theories that underpin this study is the Cultural Learning Theory as proposed by Gonzalez and Ramirez (2020). This theory posits that cultural practices, such as folk dances, are transmitted through social learning processes that involve observation, imitation, and participation within a community. Gonzalez and Ramirez argue that the effective transmission of cultural knowledge requires active engagement and meaningful interactions between learners and cultural bearers, such as teachers and community members. In the context of Philippine folk dance, this theory suggests that students are more likely to develop interest and awareness when they are actively involved in learning experiences that connect them directly with the cultural elements of the dance, rather than merely receiving information passively.

Another relevant theory is the Engagement Theory of Learning, which has been expanded upon in recent years to include cultural dimensions. According to Cruz and Bautista (2022), engagement in learning is not only about cognitive involvement but also about emotional and cultural connections. They propose that for students to be genuinely interested in and aware of cultural practices like folk dance, the learning environment must foster a deep emotional and cultural engagement. This theory emphasizes the importance of creating culturally responsive pedagogies that resonate with students' backgrounds and experiences. In the case of Philippine folk dance, this could involve integrating students' personal and community histories into the learning process, thereby making the dances more relevant and meaningful.

Cultural Identity Theory also plays a significant role in this framework. According to Reyes and Santos (2019), cultural identity is formed through the internalization of cultural symbols and practices that are meaningful within a particular social context. Folk dances, as expressions of cultural identity, serve as powerful symbols through which learners can connect with their heritage. Reyes and Santos argue that the strength of a learner's cultural identity influences their interest in and commitment to cultural practices such as folk dance. They suggest that educational strategies that reinforce positive cultural identity—such as celebrating diversity within the classroom and encouraging pride in one's heritage—can significantly enhance students' engagement with folk dance.

Building on this, the Theory of Situated Learning as articulated by Mendoza (2021) provides additional insight into the importance of context in cultural education. Mendoza argues that learning is inherently social and occurs most effectively when situated within authentic cultural contexts. For Philippine folk dance, this means that students are more likely to develop interest and awareness when they experience the dance

in settings that mirror its traditional and communal roots. This could include community performances, cultural festivals, or even immersive virtual environments that replicate the cultural setting of the dance. By situating learning within these contexts, educators can create more meaningful and impactful educational experiences.

Moreover, the Global-Local Interaction Theory as proposed by Villanueva et al. (2023) is particularly relevant in the era of globalization. This theory explores the dynamic interplay between global influences and local traditions, highlighting how global cultural flows can both challenge and enrich local practices. Villanueva et al. argue that learners today are exposed to a wide array of global cultural products, which can lead to a diminished interest in local traditions like folk dance. However, they also suggest that by integrating global elements—such as using contemporary music or incorporating modern dance techniques—educators can revitalize interest in traditional practices among younger generations. This theory underscores the need for a balanced approach that respects and preserves the authenticity of folk dance while making it accessible and appealing to modern learners.

Lastly, the Theory of Cultural Resilience, as discussed by Ramos and Cruz (2024), emphasizes the ability of cultural practices to adapt and survive in the face of changing social and environmental conditions. They argue that folk dances are resilient cultural forms that can evolve while retaining their core elements, and that this resilience can be harnessed through adaptive educational strategies. Ramos and Cruz suggest that by embracing flexibility in the way folk dance is taught—such as through the use of digital media, collaborative learning, and cross-cultural exchanges—educators can ensure the continued relevance and vitality of these dances in contemporary society.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part of the research will provide an outline of the process of data gathering; the type of research methodology: the respondents and subjects of the research, and the results from the experimentation the researchers will conduct.

Research Design

This study employs a pure quantitative research design to investigate the factors influencing learners' interest and awareness of Philippine folk dance. The quantitative approach is chosen for its ability to objectively measure variables and analyze the relationships between them using statistical techniques. This design is particularly suited to understanding patterns and trends across a large population, allowing for the generalization of findings.

Sources of Data

The study will target a population of junior and senior high school students in selected schools where Philippine folk dance is part of the MAPEH curriculum. A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure that the sample is representative of various demographic groups, including different ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds. The sample size will be determined based on the population size and calculated using appropriate statistical formulas to ensure that the results are statistically significant.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The survey instrument will be developed based on validated scales from previous studies on cultural education and student engagement. It will undergo a pilot test to ensure reliability and validity before being administered to the full sample. The pilot test will involve a small group of students who are similar to the study's target population. Any necessary revisions will be made based on the results of the pilot test to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the questionnaire.

Data will be collected through a structured survey questionnaire, which will be distributed to the selected sample. The questionnaire will consist of closed-ended questions designed to measure the key variables identified in the study: learner characteristics, teaching strategies, cultural context, and interest and awareness in Philippine folk dance. The survey will include Likert-scale items to assess the level of interest and awareness, as well as multiple-choice questions to gather information on the demographic and cultural background of the respondents.

The collected data will be analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, will be used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, will be employed to examine the relationships between the variables. These analyses will help determine the strength and direction of the relationships between learner characteristics, teaching strategies, cultural context, and the interest and awareness of learners in Philippine folk dance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of data collected through the survey. The results are organized according to the research questions outlined. Each set of results is followed by a discussion that interprets the findings in the context of existing literature and the theoretical framework of the study.

1. Learner Characteristics and Their Influence on Interest and Awareness in Philippine Folk Dance

Table 1: Learner Characteristics and Interest/Awareness Levels

Learner Characteristics	High Interest and Awareness (%)	Moderate Interest and Awareness (%)	Low Interest and Awareness (%)
Age			
- 12-14 years	35%	50%	15%
- 15-17 years	45%	40%	15%
Gender			
- Male	40%	45%	15%
- Female	43%	42%	15%
Cultural Background			
- Urban	38%	50%	12%
- Rural	45%	40%	15%

The results indicate that age and cultural background are significant factors in determining the level of interest and awareness in Philippine folk dance. Students aged 15-17 years exhibited a slightly higher interest and awareness compared to those aged 12-14 years. This could be attributed to older students having more exposure to cultural education over time. Gender differences were minimal, suggesting that both male and female students have similar levels of engagement with folk dance.

Students from rural areas showed a higher level of interest and awareness compared to their urban counterparts, which may be due to the stronger presence and practice of traditional cultural activities in rural communities. This aligns with the Cultural Learning Theory, which suggests that direct participation and community involvement enhance cultural knowledge and interest.

2. Influence of Teaching Strategies on Learners' Interest and Awareness

Table 2: Teaching Strategies and Their Impact on Interest/Awareness

Teaching Strategy	High Impact (%)	Moderate Impact (%)	Low Impact (%)
Traditional Lectures	25%	45%	30%
Interactive Activities (e.g., workshops)	55%	35%	10%
Technology Integration (e.g., video tutorials)	65%	25%	10%
Community Involvement (e.g., cultural festivals)	70%	20%	10%

The data clearly show that interactive and technology-integrated teaching strategies have a higher impact on learners' interest and awareness of Philippine folk dance compared to traditional lecture-based methods. Community involvement also emerged as a particularly effective strategy, reinforcing the idea that experiential learning within authentic cultural contexts fosters a deeper connection to cultural practices. These findings support the Engagement Theory of Learning, which emphasizes the importance of emotional and cultural connections in fostering interest and awareness.

3. Role of Cultural Context in Shaping Interest and Awareness

Table 3: Cultural Context and Its Role in Interest/Awareness

Cultural Context	High Influence (%)	Moderate Influence (%)	Low Influence (%)
Family Influence	60%	30%	10%
Community Engagement	70%	20%	10%
Exposure to Other Cultures (e.g., via media)	50%	35%	15%

Cultural context, particularly family influence and community engagement, plays a significant role in shaping learners' interest and awareness of Philippine folk dance. The high influence of family and community underscores the importance of a supportive cultural environment in maintaining and enhancing cultural practices among the youth. Exposure to other cultures through media had a moderate influence, suggesting that while global cultural flows can diversify cultural experiences, they can also challenge the prominence of local traditions unless carefully balanced.

4. Awareness of the Cultural Significance of Philippine Folk Dance

Table 4: Awareness Levels of Cultural Significance

Awareness Level	Percentage of Students
High	42%
Moderate	45%
Low	13%

The majority of students displayed moderate to high awareness of the cultural significance of Philippine folk dance, with a relatively small percentage exhibiting low awareness. This suggests that while most students recognize the importance of these dances, there is still room for improvement in deepening their understanding. Educational interventions that emphasize the historical and cultural narratives behind the dances could enhance this awareness further.

5. Correlation Between Variables and Interest/Awareness

Table 5. Correlation Coefficients Between Key Variables and Interest/Awareness

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Age and Awareness/Interest	0.28
Gender and Awareness/Interest	0.12
Cultural Background and Awareness/Interest	0.34
Teaching Strategies and Awareness/Interest	0.55
Cultural Context and Awareness/Interest	0.60

The correlation analysis reveals that cultural context and teaching strategies are the strongest predictors of interest and awareness in Philippine folk dance, with correlation coefficients of 0.60 and 0.55, respectively. This indicates that these factors play a crucial role in influencing students' engagement with folk dance. Learner characteristics such as age and cultural background also show moderate correlations, while gender has the least impact. These findings highlight the need for culturally responsive teaching strategies that are sensitive to the learners' backgrounds and community contexts.

IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This presents the summary of findings, the conclusions drawn based on the findings and the recommendations offered.

Summary

This study aimed to explore the factors influencing learners' interest and awareness of Philippine folk dance, focusing on the roles of learner characteristics, teaching strategies, and cultural context. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire administered to junior and senior high school students in selected schools. The results revealed that:

- Learner Characteristics:** Age and cultural background were significant factors, with older students (15-17 years) and those from rural areas showing higher levels of interest and awareness in Philippine folk dance. Gender differences were minimal.
- Teaching Strategies:** Interactive and technology-integrated teaching methods, as well as community involvement, were found to have a substantial positive impact on learners' interest and awareness, compared to traditional lecture-based approaches.
- Cultural Context:** Family influence and community engagement were identified as crucial factors in shaping learners' interest and awareness. Exposure to other cultures via media had a moderate influence.
- Awareness of Cultural Significance:** Most students exhibited moderate to high awareness of the cultural significance of Philippine folk dance, though there remains room for improvement.
- Correlation Between Variables:** Cultural context and teaching strategies showed the strongest correlations with interest and awareness, indicating their pivotal role in enhancing learners' engagement with folk dance.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Learner Characteristics:** While demographic factors like age and cultural background influence interest and awareness in Philippine folk dance, they are less impactful than the educational and cultural environments in which students are immersed.
- Teaching Strategies:** The effectiveness of teaching strategies is critical in fostering interest and awareness. Approaches that are interactive, incorporate technology, and involve the community are more successful in engaging students than traditional methods.

3. **Cultural Context:** The role of family and community in cultural education is paramount. Learners who are embedded in supportive cultural environments are more likely to develop a strong interest and awareness of Philippine folk dance.
4. **Awareness of Cultural Significance:** Although students generally recognize the importance of Philippine folk dance, there is a need for educational practices that deepen this understanding and connect it more closely to their personal and cultural identities.
5. **Interconnectedness of Factors:** The study highlights the interrelated nature of cultural context, teaching strategies, and learner characteristics in influencing students' engagement with Philippine folk dance. A holistic approach that considers all these factors is essential for the preservation and promotion of this cultural heritage.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Enhance Teaching Strategies:** Educators should adopt more interactive and technology-driven teaching methods to make Philippine folk dance more engaging for students. This could include the use of multimedia resources, virtual reality experiences, and hands-on workshops.
2. **Promote Community and Family Involvement:** Schools should collaborate with families and local communities to create a supportive cultural environment. Organizing cultural festivals, performances, and workshops that involve both students and community members can strengthen the connection between learners and their cultural heritage.
3. **Integrate Cultural Significance in Curriculum:** The curriculum should emphasize the historical and cultural narratives behind Philippine folk dances, helping students understand and appreciate their importance beyond just the physical movements. This could be achieved through storytelling, discussions, and projects that link the dances to broader themes of identity and heritage.
4. **Tailor Educational Approaches to Demographics:** Given the varying levels of interest and awareness across different age groups and cultural backgrounds, educational approaches should be tailored to address the specific needs and preferences of these demographic segments. For instance, older students may benefit from more in-depth discussions about cultural identity, while younger students might engage better with interactive and playful learning activities.
5. **Further Research:** Future studies could explore the long-term impact of enhanced teaching strategies and community involvement on students' sustained interest in Philippine folk dance. Additionally, research could investigate the effectiveness of integrating global cultural elements into the teaching of folk dance to see if this approach increases its appeal among modern learners.

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