Exploring confidence in boys' elementary dance education

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

This study explored low self-confidence in elementary school male students and strategies to overcome it. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, focusing on 18 fifth grade students. Data collection methods included interviews, classroom observations, and self-confidence questionnaires. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model (data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing). The results showed that most male students lacked confidence in solo dancing but were confident in groups. The inhibiting factors included lack of previous experience, discomfort in front of peers, fear of judgment, lack of support and encouragement, and lack of practice and preparation. To overcome these issues, inclusive learning strategies, support, and a supportive environment are essential. Eliminating gender stereotypes in dance education is also important. The implications of this study underscore the need to create a positive and inclusive environment for male students to develop their confidence and interest in dance. It is expected that their participation and involvement in arts activities at school will increase.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dance teaching at the elementary level is an important part of the school curriculum to help develop students' creativity and self-expression. However, paying attention to students' self-confidence, especially male students, when learning to dance is often neglected. Self-confidence is an important factor in helping to overcome challenges and reach maximum potential in any activity, including dancing.

Previous research shows that male students often experience a "confidence gap" when learning dance. They feel embarrassed or lack self-confidence when participating in dancing activities that are considered more popular among female students. Therefore, studying the factors that influence male students' self-confidence in learning dance is very important [1]. By identifying these factors, we can develop targeted strategies that build student confidence and promote a more inclusive learning environment. A comprehensive understanding of the different challenges faced by male students in dance education is essential to encouraging their active participation and enjoyment in this artistic activity.

Students' self-confidence issues, especially male students in grade five at Dawuan Barat II Elementary School, were identified as low. When asked to mimic the dance movements the teacher demonstrates during practice, they feel shy and fear ridicule. Disinterest in dance education made them reluctant to participate, fearful of being perceived as feminine, and exhibiting hesitant behaviors such as

bowing their heads, nervousness, cold sweats, and laughter. Students feel unable to express their opinions, and this lack of confidence negatively affects their performance and learning outcomes in dance. As a result, they tend to achieve low learning outcomes in dance education.

Factors affecting male students' confidence in dance education include gender stereotypes that imply dance is more appropriate for female students, which can inhibit male students' interest and confidence. These stereotypes create a bias that reduces support for male students in dance. In addition, the less supportive school environment, with little representation of male students in dance groups, a lack of support from classmates, and social perceptions associated with dance, also play a role in reducing their confidence. Therefore, it is important to overcome existing gender stereotypes and create an inclusive school environment that values the interests and talents of all students, regardless of gender, to support the development of their confidence in dance [2], [3].

The importance of addressing the confidence gap in dance education for male students lies in ensuring that they feel accepted and supported in exploring their interests without fear or discrimination. Strong self-confidence will provide a better foundation for male students to reach their full potential in dance and develop unique artistic skills and expressions [4]. This not only benefits individual students but also contributes to a more inclusive and diverse artistic community, enriching the overall educational experience.

The few studies that have been conducted have focused more on female students in dance, indicating a difference in confidence levels between male and female students. This study is different because it looks at male students' self-confidence in primary school dance classes and what makes them doubt themselves. It also has implications for arts education by suggesting ways to make learning more inclusive, and it adds to the body of research by filling in a knowledge gap in this area. This study helps us understand the different factors and situations that affect male students' confidence in teaching dance. It will also be useful for teachers who work with the arts and do more research in dance education, making classrooms that are welcoming and supportive for everyone.

2.   RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to gain a deeper understanding of male students' confidence when teaching dance at the elementary level. This research model aims to describe and analyze the experiences and perspectives of male students in the dance context. The subjects of this study were 18 5th grade students at Dawuan Barat II primary school.

The data will be collected using a variety of methods. First, the researcher will conduct in-depth interviews with teachers and male students participating in dance education to find out male students' confidence in dancing at the elementary level. Second, direct observation will be conducted in the dance class, where the researcher will observe the interactions and participation of male students. Third, data were collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered to male students to assess their dancing confidence in a more measurable way.

In addition, documents will be an important source of data. Relevant documents, such as class notes, dance exercises, or artwork created by male students, will be collected and analyzed. This document can provide further insight into the progress and development of male dance students as well as reflect their confidence levels through the work they create.

All the data collected will be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three steps: data reduction, data visualization, drawing conclusions, and verification. Therefore, it is hoped that this research will provide comprehensive insight into male students' self-confidence in teaching dance at the elementary level and provide a valuable scientific contribution in the context of arts education.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Male students' self-confidence in dance education at the elementary level

The research results show several aspects of male students' self-confidence in elementary school-level dance education. Based on observation data carried out during dance learning activities in elementary schools, it can be seen in Table 1 regarding observation data on the dance learning process, which is as follows.

Based on observations, the majority of male students, around 58%, stated that they were less confident in their dancing abilities. This suggests the existence of self-confidence issues in the context of dance teaching, consistent with previous research. Confidence in dancing varies depending on gender and age group, with women having higher levels and men having lower levels [1].

On the optimistic side, about 72% of male students lack optimism when imitating dance moves and feel uncomfortable when being noticed by their friends. This shows a lack of confidence and optimism in

male students participating in dance. They may feel uncomfortable or lack confidence when performing dance moves. It's important to note that optimism is not a fixed trait and can be strengthened by recognizing and addressing negative attitudes and behaviors [5].

Table 1. Observation results sheet

Aspects Observed	Description	Qualifications	
		Yes	Not
1. Self-confidence	a. Students dare to practice their own dance in front of their friends.	3	15
	b. Students bow their heads when dancing.	12	6
Percentage		42%	58%
2. Optimistic	a. Students are not shy to imitate the dance movements.	4	14
	b. Students feel comfortable when seen by their peers.	6	12
Percentage		28%	72%
3. Objective	a. Students are confident when dancing in groups.	11	7
	b. Students enjoy learning dance.	9	9
Percentage		56%	44%

Male students in this study showed higher levels of confidence when dancing in groups and expressed happiness when learning to dance (56%). This phenomenon is consistent with the social nature of dance, where group interaction, support, and social dynamics can increase individual confidence and satisfaction when learning to dance. The presence of friends in this environment provides support, creates a sense of belonging, and stimulates risk-taking, contributing to increased levels of self-confidence [1].

This study suggests that gender differences in dance confidence may be influenced by stereotypes and social norms that view dance as a feminine activity. Women may feel more encouraged to participate and express themselves when dancing, leading to higher levels of confidence. On the other hand, men may face social pressure or the impression that dancing is less masculine, which can affect their confidence when dancing. Lovatt [1], in his research, revealed that the level of self-confidence in dancing tends to be low in men, starting to increase in the late teens and early 20 s but decreasing in the mid-30 s, before then increasing significantly in the mid-60 s. These findings highlight the complexity of the development of dance confidence in men during different stages of life, with significant changes at certain periods. As shown in Figure 1, male students seem reluctant or embarrassed to perform solo dances.

Figure 1. Students look shy when dancing solo

Students' confidence in dancing is affected by the social environment, making them shy and afraid of being ridiculed. Therefore, creating an inclusive and supportive school environment is important to boost students' confidence in dance. This involves eliminating gender stereotypes and providing emotional support to students. On the contrary, several studies have shown that dance provides students with the opportunity to express themselves and enjoy movement, thereby potentially increasing their self-confidence and improving their social skills [6], [7].

Students tend to feel comfortable and enjoy dancing in groups because they can rely on the support and friendship of their peers [8]. Students are positive about group work but recognize potential barriers, and there is a dynamic link between friendships and peer relationships and group work dynamics [9]. The presence of others provides a sense of security and allows students to imitate and learn from each other's

movements, creating a positive and inclusive environment for dancing. Nonetheless, some students may be anxious when being the center of attention, fearing ridicule or standing out from the group, which may affect their anxiety and self-awareness in the context of dancing. As shown in Figure 2, it shows that male students seem comfortable dancing together with their friends.

Figure 2. Students look more confident in group dancing

Interviews with teachers showed that male students in dance often feel a lack of confidence and are reluctant to perform in front of others. Teachers recognize the need for additional supporting to overcome this discomfort and increase male students' confidence in dance. Therefore, the role of teachers and an inclusive school environment are crucial to support the development of male students' confidence in dance.

The next data collection technique is in the form of a questionnaire. Researchers provide instruments in the form of questionnaires to students in order to obtain more valid data about student confidence in learning dance. The following are the results of the presentation of student self-confidence questionnaires:

Table 2. Percentage calculation results of male students' self-confidence questionnaire in learning dance in Class V Dawuan Barat II Elementary School

No.	Question aspect	Yes	No
1	Confidence in own abilities	37.5%	62.5%
2	Not easily discouraged	29.1%	71%
3	Not relying on others	36.1%	64%
4	Dare to express opinions	26.3%	74%
5	Responsible	30.5%	69%
6	Easy to communicate	33.3%	67%

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire given to fifth grade students at Dawuan Barat II Elementary School regarding their confidence in dance education, some interesting findings were found. First, about 37.5% of male students showed a lack of confidence in their dancing ability. Male students' low self-confidence in dancing is often considered a common occurrence in dance education. Although not significant overall, this low self-confidence may be attributed to the perception that dance is a domain more commonly identified with women, thereby influencing students' attitudes towards the activity. This perception can create social pressure or the impression that participating in dance is less in line with a masculine image, which in turn can impact male students' level of self-confidence in the context of dance [10]. This can be a problem because dance education is not only about learning dance techniques but also about building character, self-confidence, and increasing appreciation for aesthetic and ethical values [11], [12].

About 29.1% of male students tend to give up easily on learning dance movements, perhaps because they face difficulties in mastering the movements. They tend to consider dancing a tiring activity and prefer to play the role of spectators rather than actively participate in dance practice. Some male students even find excuses not to attend dance lessons and appear less enthusiastic and uninterested in the teacher's instructions during the lesson [13]–[15].

The importance of building students' confidence in dance is revealed in this study. About 64% of male students showed independence in dance learning, not relying on the help of teachers or classmates. While about 36% of students are more likely to depend on others, especially in imitating dance movements, and feel less confident in exploring their creativity and self-expression in dance, this reflects the variation in confidence levels among students in dance.

The majority of male students participating in this study had low confidence when expressing opinions regarding dance moves, with only about 26.3% being confident. This shows the potential to develop their speaking skills and confidence in dancing. Confidence plays an important role in encouraging students to take risks, express themselves authentically, and develop unique dance styles. Lack of confidence can make students hesitant to express their individuality and more dependent on guidance and validation from others [16].

Analysis results show that the majority of male students have a low sense of responsibility for dance movements, with only about 30.5% answering "yes". This shows the need to increase awareness of responsibility in dance. Discipline is important for developing skills and concentration during rehearsal and performance. Following dance exercises also helps students understand the value of each movement, encourages a deeper appreciation of art, and increases motivation to improve the quality of the exercises [17]. As can be seen in Figure 3, the male students' dance movements are not appropriate due to a lack of coordination in a group context. This shows the need to improve communication and coordination skills between students in order to improve the overall quality of dance movements.

Figure 3. Incompatible student dance movements due to lack of group coordination

Overall, the survey results indicate a weakness in male students' confidence in dance learning. To improve their confidence, it is necessary to provide positive feedback, opportunities for creative exploration, and inspiring role models. Involving students in inclusive dance activities and strengthening cooperation among peers can also help improve their confidence.

3.2. Factors that inhibit student self-confidence

Based on the interview data conducted, there are several inhibiting factors that affect students' self-confidence in learning dance in Class V Dawuan Barat II Elementary School, as follows:

− First, the lack of previous experience: some students revealed that they had never taken dance classes before. This can be a hindering factor, as they have no dance experience and may feel less confident. Lack of previous experience in participating in dance classes can limit students' abilities and make them feel less confident [18]. Students who have never attended dance classes before may not be familiar with the movements, techniques, or basic concepts of dance taught in class.
− Second, the results of the analysis show that the majority of male students have a low sense of responsibility for dance movements, with only about 30.5% answering "yes". This shows the need to increase awareness of responsibility in dance. Discipline is important for developing skills and concentration during rehearsal and performance. Following dance exercises also helps students understand the value of each movement, encourages a deeper appreciation of art, and increases motivation to improve the quality of the exercises [19].

- Third, lack of support and encouragement and environmental factors can also affect a student's self-confidence. If students do not receive support and encouragement from teachers and friends, they may feel less confident when dancing. Dancers experience positive impact when their basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met [20]. Lack of motivation can also be a factor in dance performance, causing many students to lack confidence [21].
- Fourth, lack of practice and preparation: students who do not practice and prepare well before learning to dance may feel less confident when dancing. A lack of preparation can affect their confidence. Consistent practice is essential for continuous improvement and allows students to gradually reach milestones and eventually achieve their ultimate goals [22], [23].

To overcome these inhibiting factors, it is important that teachers and schools provide adequate support and encouragement to students. Teachers can create a positive atmosphere, provide constructive feedback, and create opportunities for students to build confidence. Additionally, proper practice and preparation are also important in helping students feel more confident and ready to perform the dance.

3.3. Implications for art education by designing inclusive learning strategies

The research identified factors inhibiting male students' confidence in dance. To address this, arts education should implement inclusive strategies, such as rewarding students' progress, reflection sessions, and individual self-development, to increase their motivation and confidence in learning dance. Thus, teachers can play an important role in supporting students' development in dance [24], [25].

Teachers need to create a supportive and comfortable learning environment where mistakes are considered part of the learning process. Exercises and activities that build students' confidence in expressing themselves through dance movements need to be implemented [26]. Teachers can also reduce pressure by creating a positive atmosphere, encouraging cooperation among students, and appreciating the diversity of dance abilities. In addition, dancing provides physical benefits such as increased strength, flexibility, and balance, which can boost students' self-confidence and self-esteem and promote positive body perception [27].

Teachers need to apply a variety of learning approaches in dance, such as demonstrations, group exercises, instructional videos, and small group discussions. Demonstrations help students imitate movements accurately; group exercises enhance social interaction; online resources enrich understanding of dance styles; and group discussions allow for movement analysis and constructive feedback. With this approach, students can better understand and internalize dance movements [26]–[28].

Teachers can increase students' engagement in dance learning by involving them in decision-making and group work. This collaboration allows for the exchange of ideas, shared learning, and the development of social skills. It also teaches teamwork, which is essential in dance. Teachers should provide positive feedback on students' efforts and achievements, no matter how small, to boost students' self-esteem and motivate them in dance learning [20], [29]. Teachers can also apply the differentiation approach to dance learning, given the different abilities and interest levels of students. This includes assigning tasks that match individual abilities, providing additional support for students who need it, and challenging more advanced students with more complex tasks [29], [30].

By designing an inclusive learning strategy based on the above research data, it is expected that male students can develop their confidence and interest in learning dance. In addition, this strategy can also encourage students' active participation and engagement in arts activities at school. This not only benefits individual students, but also contributes to a more vibrant and inclusive artistic community within educational institutions, enriching the overall learning experience.

4.   CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the low self-confidence of male students in learning dance at the elementary school level, several findings were found that illustrate the condition of students' self-confidence. The majority of male students do not have a strong belief in their dancing ability, feel insecure when imitating dance movements, and lack confidence when being the center of attention. However, when dancing in groups, they tend to be more confident and happier. The inhibiting factors that affect students' self-confidence include lack of previous experience, discomfort when seen by peers, fear of judgment from peers, lack of support and encouragement, and lack of practice and preparation. To overcome these problems, it is necessary to apply inclusive learning strategies, such as providing support and encouragement, creating a supportive environment, and using various learning approaches. The implications for art education should pay attention to the importance of creating a positive and inclusive environment and eliminating gender stereotypes in dance. Thus, it is hoped that male students can develop their confidence and interest in dance, as well as increase their participation and involvement in arts activities at school.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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