

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Opportunities for the Development of Motor Skills through Music-Movement and Dance Activities of 9–10-Year-Old Pupils

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Abstract

The goal of the research was to determine the impact of an intervention program containing musical movement and dance activities on the level of pupils' physical abilities at the elementary level of education in physical and sport education classes. The object of the research consisted of 63 pupils, boys (n=30) aged 10.21±0.42 and girls (n=32) aged 10.32±0.37. The content of the movement program was selected means containing music and movement, dance activities and aerobics, which were implemented for 18 weeks, twice a week, 45 min during physical and sport education. In terms of data collection methods, standardized tests for physical education practice were used. Tests were used to assess the level of motor skills: sit-and-reach test, standing long jump, sit-ups in 30s, endurance shuttle run and shuttle run 4x10. The somatometry method was used. The effect of the implemented movement program was confirmed and significant positive changes in the level of the observed movement abilities were observed: the level of mobility in the joints of the trunk in boys (t=-8.471), girls (t=-9.357), explosive power of the lower limbs in boys (t=-14.459), girls (Z=-4.940), the dynamic and endurance power of the abdominal, hip and thigh muscles in boys (Z=-4.325), girls (t=-19.264), running speed in both boys (Z=-4.783), girls (t=7.095) with a large effect size, in endurance skills in both boys (Z=-4.828), girls, (Z=-5.028) also with a large effect size. Based on the results, the regular and purposeful physical activity of pupils in the school environment significantly influences the level of physical abilities, and thus physical fitness as one of the manifestations of health.

Keywords: aerobic, musical movement and dance activity, PE, physical abilities, primary school pupils

Introduction

Modern lifestyles and the absence of physical activity result in reduced physical fitness, musculoskeletal disorders, obesity, and the development of various non-infectious diseases carried into adulthood (Morano, Rutigliano, Rago, Pettoello-Mantovani, & Campanozzi, 2016; Di Maglie, 2017; Vukelja, Milanovic, & Salaj, 2022; Caron, Bernard, & Gadais, 2023). The persistence of risk factors during childhood, gives a prerequisite to prevent the development of cardiorespiratory and chronic disorders in adulthood (Ekelund et al., 2012; Negrea et al., 2021). On the other hand, an increase in the amount of physical activity in schoolchildren is directly related to many health benefits such as physical fitness, better bone structure (larger, stronger and firmer

bone mass), and a more favourable body weight status (Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee-PAGAC, 2018). New guidelines recommend at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day for children and adolescents (WHO, 2020). One option is to provide healthy lifestyle education for pupils at all levels of education (Gozhenko, Biryukov, Gozhenko, & Zukow, 2018; Diachenko-Bohun et al., 2019; Kashuba et al., 2020). Physical and sport education plays an essential role in the curriculum and is an essential part of the educational process for pupils. It should contribute to the prevention of sedentary lifestyle, ensure physical activity of pupils, act on the holistic formation of the personality of the young individual with the formation of lasting habits into adulthood in accordance with WHO recommenda-



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tions (Mantjes et al., 2012; Colella, 2016; Marttinen, Fredrick, & Silverman, 2018; D'Anna, Forte, & Gomez, 2019; Marinho, Neiva, Marques, Lopes, & Morais, 2022). To achieve the aforementioned goal of physical education, it is essential to offer pupils an attractive and varied content with the opportunity to experience success, which creates the basic prerequisite for seeking further activity. Studies point to the fact that fun and enjoyment in physical education (PE) classes can influence the development of positive attitudes towards physical activity (Silverman, 2017; Constantinides & Silverman, 2018). Based on the above, the authors recommend the educators to implement engaging movement programs in school physical education. Cvejić & Ostojić (2017) used the FITT program in their practice, whose main goal was to promote health and increase physical fitness. They recommended practicing in a developmental zone according to the students' abilities and preferences, with a constant increase in the load (intensity or duration) of physical activities. The above program is consistent with the study by Sallis et al. (2012), which means it is Health Optimizing PE or HOPE. The purpose of the FITT programme was to provide pupils with the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that lead to lifelong activity. In relation to the above, it is recognised that pupils' activity alone, based on their interest in a varied movement programme, can lead to spontaneous engagement in the activities on offer, which in turn leads to the development of movement skills or physical fitness.

Such programmes for pupils should include a programme containing music, dance or aerobic activities. Their effectiveness is confirmed by some studies, which report that programs with applied aerobics have been confirmed to have positive effects on physical and mental health or the development of physical fitness for children (Gu, Chang, & Solmon, 2016; Cvejić, Buišić, Mitrović, & Ostojić, 2018). Independent studies of Kouli, Rokka, Mavridis, and Derri (2009), and Podrigalo, Iermakov, Alekseev, and Rovnaya (2016), and Rokka et al. (2019) highlight the popularity of aerobics and dance in physical and sport education classes, which lies in the non-competitive nature of the physical activity with the induction of a pleasant atmosphere in the group by means of a musical background. Some researchers have noted the development of body posture quality by dancing activities intervention (Gao, Zhang, & Stodden, 2013; Andrieieva et al., 2021; Kashuba et al., 2021; May et al.,

2021). The following research confirm the effects of the mentioned means of physical education in different age categories. Mavridis et al. (2004) describe the positive effect of aerobic and dance program in physical education in 6-7 years old pupils on health-related abilities (cardiorespiratory fitness, strength, endurance, flexibility etc.), each to a different degree.

The purpose of the study (Kouli et al. 2009) was to evaluate the level of health-related fitness in 10 to 11 years old pupils. Afterwards, Aldemir, Ramazanoğlu, Çamlıgüney, and Kaya (2011) confirm the positive effect of dance activities in adolescents, Pantelić et al. (2019) confirmed the effect of an experimental dance program on children's motor coordination skills. The above-mentioned studies confirm the positive effects of the aerobics and dance program in school physical education for creating a suitable climate, motivating to physical activity, affecting the quality of body posture, increasing the level of physical fitness, or coordination abilities. Also, the movement abilities development in different age categories, but confirmation of the effect of musical movement and dance activities in 9-10 years old pupils is not sufficiently researched. The stated findings were the impetus for the creation of an attractive interventional musical movement and dance program for physical and sport education classes.

The goal of the research was to determine the impact of an intervention program containing musical movement and dance activities on the level of pupils' physical abilities at the elementary level of education in physical and sport education classes.

Material and methods

Participants

In accordance with the goal, the research group included overall $\Sigma n=62$ pupils ($n=30$ boys and $n=32$ girls) of the town of Banská Bystrica, Slovak Republic, aged 9-10 years, i.e., pupils of early school age (included in I and II health group without impairments), willing to participate in research, with the consent of their parent's takers and of the school. Ethical approval was obtained from the ethical committee at the Matej Bel University, under project n. 1522/2022. Measurements were carried out in accordance with the ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki. Each participant voluntarily provided written informed consent before participating. The primary characteristic of the groups is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the research object

| Measured values | Research object (n=62) | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| | Boys (n=30) | Girls (n=32) |
| Age/years | 10.21±0.42 | 10.32±0.37 |
| Body weight/kg | 43.21±7.54 | 35.41±7.11 |
| Body height/cm | 145.37±6.54 | 138.1 ± 6.24 |
| BMI kg/m ² | 20.45±2.21 | 18.57 ± 2.11 |

Measurement organization

The research has taken place in the academic year 2021/2022 at an elementary school in Banská Bystrica. After a thorough preparation of the research in order to achieve the aim, in February an input diagnostics (V1) of somatometric indicators and a diagnostics of body posture was carried out, which was evaluated by a standardized test used in school practice. Subsequently, an exercise program aimed at health promotion in relation to the correct posture of the pupils, was included in the teaching content of compulsory physical and

sport education, twice a week for 45 minutes, for a period of 18 weeks, a total of 36 lessons. Each lesson of exercise program included music-implementing exercise and dance activities (Table 2), contained 10-minute warm-up, 25-minute main part and 5-minute Cool-Down. Every lesson included a 10 min warm up with stretching. The music was played at a soft rhythm 120-128 beats per minute (bpm). Main part included 30 min continuous musical-movement and dance activities, such as aerobic, dances, dance games, exercise on the wall bars, exercise on the over ball and stability ball, skip-

ping rope games. The intensity of the main program was 60-75% of the maximum heart rate with a rhythm of 130-135 bpm in the first six weeks. After six weeks, from week seven to week eleven, the intensity was increased to 75-85% of the maximum heart rate (music 140-150 bpm). In the next seven weeks, the intensity of the program was variable, every other hour was reduced to 60-70% of the maximum heart rate and rest weeks was 75-85% of the maximum heart rate. In

the last part of the lesson, the participants were given 5 min. cool down. It included muscular strength exercises with slow and relaxing rhythm music. The said program was inspired by following researches (Mavridis et al., 2004; Kouli et al., 2009; Andrieieva et al., 2021; Mischenko et al., 2023). The process of teaching was led by a qualified teacher with years of experience. Subsequently, output testing (V2) of the same indicators was performed.

Table 2. Timetable of the Movement program for 1 month (sample)

| Lesson | Warm-up (10min.) | Main Part (30 min.) | | Cool down (5min.) |
|--------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | | A part | B part | |
| 1 | Warm-up | Stability ball | Dance games | stretching |
| 2 | Warm-up | Low Aerobic | Dance- modern | stretching |
| 3 | Warm-up | Stability ball | Dance- folk | stretching |
| 4 | Warm-up | Dance Aerobik | Dance - modern | stretching |
| 5 | Warm-up | Over ball | Rope Skipping | stretching |
| 6 | Warm-up | Exercise on the wall bars | Dance games | stretching |
| 7 | Warm-up | Skipping Rope games | Dance- folk | stretching |
| 8 | Warm-up | Low Aerobic | Dance Aerobik | stretching |
| Σ | 80min. | 240 min/month | | 40 min. |

Measurement Taking

In terms of data collection, somatometry was used, body height, body weight, BMI were collected (anthropometers and digital scales were used). The following tests were used to test physical abilities: sit-reach test, standing long jump, sit-ups test for 30 s, endurance shuttle run (Moravec et al., 1996) and 4x10 shuttle run (Čillík et al. 2013).

Data Analyses

In terms of data processing methods, the mathematical and statistical methods to process the collected data and to calculate basic descriptive statistics were used. Paired-Samples T Test was used to determine the significance of differences between input (pretest) and output (posttest) measurements in the studied variables. Cohen's d coefficient was used to calculate the effect size in the paired-samples t-test procedure, which was interpreted according to the minimum thresholds as follows: $d=0.20$ - small effect, $d=0.50$ - medium effect, $d=0.80$ - large effect (Cohen, 1988). In case of rejection

of normality of data distribution by Shapiro-Wilk test, paired Wilcoxon signed rank test (Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test) was used to determine the significance of differences between input and output measurements. The effect size calculation for the Wilcoxon signed rank test procedure used the coefficient r (Corder - Foreman, 2009), which was interpreted according to the minimum thresholds as follows: $r=0.10$ - small effect, $r=0.30$ - medium effect, $r=0.50$ - large effect (Cohen, 1988). The probability of a Type I error was set at $\alpha=0.05$ in all statistical analyses. Statistical analysis procedures were performed in accordance with the recommendations of the publication Pivovarnicek (2021) using IBM® SPSS® Statistics v28 and Microsoft® Office Excel 2016 software.

Results

In the observed sample of primary school pupils, the effect of the designed movement programme on the level of movement abilities in boys (Table 3, Table 4) and separately in girls (Table 5, Table 6) was evaluated.

Table 3. Comparison of the input and output measurements in boys

| | | | X | SD | Median | Mode | Min | Max |
|------|----------------|------|-------|------|--------|------|------|------|
| SR | V ₁ | (cm) | 16.6 | 6.2 | 16 | 16 | 4 | 30 |
| | V ₂ | (cm) | 20.5 | 5.04 | 21 | 17 | 11 | 31 |
| SLJ | V ₁ | (cm) | 139.8 | 28.5 | 138 | 115 | 89 | 200 |
| | V ₂ | (cm) | 153.2 | 27.5 | 151 | 128 | 100 | 215 |
| SU | V ₁ | (n) | 18 | 7.7 | 17 | 17 | 6 | 36 |
| | V ₂ | (n) | 23.1 | 6 | 22 | 21 | 10 | 37 |
| 4x10 | V ₁ | (s) | 13.5 | 1.6 | 13 | 11.9 | 11.3 | 17.1 |
| | V ₂ | (s) | 13 | 1.6 | 12.6 | 11 | 11 | 16.7 |
| ESR | V ₁ | (n) | 35.7 | 15 | 34 | 33 | 9 | 76 |
| | V ₂ | (n) | 40 | 15 | 38 | 41 | 15 | 77 |

SR – sit-and-reach; SLJ- standing long jump; SU- sit-ups; 4x10 the shuttle run; ESR- endurance shuttle run; SD- standard deviation; X- arithmetical mean; V₁ – input, V₂ – output

Table 4. Statistical significance of differences after movement program intervention in boys

| | Test statistics | | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| | Z-value | t-value | p-value | Effect size |
| SR | - | t=-8.471 | p<0.05 | d=1.55** |
| SLJ | - | t=-14.459 | p<0.05 | d=2.64** |
| SU | Z=-4.325 | - | p<0.05 | r=0.56* |
| 4x10 | Z=-4.783 | - | p<0.05 | r=0.62* |
| ESR | Z=-4.828 | - | p<0.05 | r=0.62* |

* Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test ** Paired-Samples T Test

Table 5. Comparison of the input and output measurements in girls

| | | | X | SD | Median | Mode | Min | Max |
|------|----------------|------|-------|------|--------|------|------|------|
| SR | V ₁ | (cm) | 21 | 6 | 21 | 22 | 5 | 33 |
| | V ₂ | (cm) | 27.3 | 3.9 | 28 | 31 | 17.5 | 34 |
| SLJ | V ₁ | (cm) | 139 | 23.8 | 134 | 115 | 103 | 186 |
| | V ₂ | (cm) | 151.2 | 22.2 | 141.5 | 141 | 119 | 191 |
| SU | V ₁ | (n) | 17.7 | 6.3 | 17 | 17 | 4 | 30 |
| | V ₂ | (n) | 21.9 | 5.8 | 22.5 | 17 | 10 | 34 |
| 4x10 | V ₁ | (s) | 13.3 | 1.3 | 13.2 | 12.9 | 11.2 | 16.4 |
| | V ₂ | (s) | 13 | 1.2 | 12.9 | 11 | 11 | 16 |
| ESR | V ₁ | (n) | 29.3 | 12.9 | 28 | 28 | 7 | 65 |
| | V ₂ | (n) | 33.8 | 12.4 | 32 | 24 | 13 | 67 |

SR – sit-and-reach; SLJ- standing long jump; SU- sit-ups; 4x10 the shuttle run; ESR- endurance shuttle run; SD- standard deviation; X- arithmetical mean; V₁ – input, V₂ – output**Table 6.** Statistical significance of differences after movement program intervention in girls

| | Test statistics | | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| | Z-value | t-value | p-value | Effect size |
| SR | - | t=-9.357 | p<0.05 | d=1.65** |
| SLJ | Z=-4.940 | - | p<0.05 | r=0.62* |
| SU | - | t=-19.264 | p<0.05 | d=3.41** |
| 4x10 | - | t=7.095 | p<0.05 | d=1.25** |
| ESR | Z=-5.028 | - | p<0.05 | r=0.63* |

* Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test ** Paired-Samples T Test

Sit and reach test. Boys demonstrated a lower level of trunk joint mobility despite an average progression of 3.9 cm, which was confirmed as significant (t=-8.471, p<0.05). In girls, a significant improvement of 6.3 cm in the result of the given test (t=-9.357, p<0.05) was observed. Differences in the level of joint mobility were demonstrated in the entire study set with a large effect size (d=1.55; d=1.65).

Comparing the input and output values of the measurement in standing long jump test, a significant difference in boys (t=-14.459, p<0.05) was found, when there was an increase in power output by an average of 13.4 cm. At the same time, the increase was higher than in girls, when girls achieved an increase in the level of explosive power of the lower limbs by an average of 12.2 cm, which also proved to be statistically significant (Z=-4.940, p<0.05). Based on the influence of the movement program, the object of the research achieved changes in the level of explosive strength of the lower limbs with a large effect (d=2.64; r=0.62).

In sit-ups test the higher mean values were found in boys, when 5.1 more repetitions were recorded in the output testing,

which was shown as a significant improvement (Z =-4.325, p<0.05). In girls, about 4.2 repetitions better performance in sit-ups test was recorded, which also proved to be significant due to the intervention (t=-19.264, p<0.05). At the same time, a large effect of the achieved changes in the level of strength of the abdominal, hip and thigh muscles for the whole group (r=0.56; d=3.41) was noticed.

In the shuttle run 4x10 test, the mean values for girls and boys were almost equal. In the input testing, boys and girls achieved a time of 13.5 s and 13.3 s, respectively. After the influence of the exercise program, an average value of 13 s from both genders was observed, so it can be considered the differences in the level of running speed to be significant in both boys (Z=-4.783, p<0.05) and girls (t=7.095, p<0.05) with a large effect (r=0.62; d=1.25).

In Endurance shuttle run test, boys performed at a higher level, as a significant improvement of 4.3 sections (Z=-4.828, p<0.05) was observed in the output testing as well as 4.5 sections in girls, confirming a significant improvement (Z=-5.028, p<0.05) with a large effect size (r=0.62, r=0.63).

Discussion

This study investigated the effect of an intervention movement program containing music and dance activities on the development of motor performance in 9-10-year-old children. By comparing the acquired data of physical development (body weight, body height, BMI) of the monitored group with the reference standards Sedláček and Cihová (2009), it was found that the groups of girls and boys fall into the average category of Slovak population.

Looking at actual findings, but also the findings of other studies, it can be concluded that the level of movement abilities of 10-year-old pupils in Slovakia is constantly decreasing. By comparing the actual findings with studies by Moravec et al. (1996), Čillík et al. (2015), Mandzák and Slováková (2018) and Lupo et al. (2022). The level of joint mobility of the school population as measured by the Sit and Reach test has a decreasing trend. In Moravec et al. (1996), the average performance for boys in Slovakia was 18.4 cm, and currently, it is recorded as 16.6 cm, which is also in agreement with Čillík et al. (2015). In comparison with the research of Lupo et al. (2022), which investigated the movement performance of students from Turin, it was found that actual research sample performed worse in input testing in terms of joint mobility for both boys and girls. However, after the targeted intervention, the observed population exceeded all the above averages, indicating that a program containing music and dance activities significantly influences the development of joint mobility, as was expected. In girls, the changes in the level of joint mobility of the Slovak population are less pronounced. In comparison, in Moravec et al. (1996) the recorded average value of the seated forward bend was 21.89 cm, in Čillík et al. (2015) at the level of 20.62 cm and the current study shows similar results, namely 21 cm. However, the observed girls were able to significantly increase the level of joint mobility due to the influence of the designed movement program.

The level of explosive strength of the lower limbs was determined by the standing long jump test. In boys, the average level of 139.8 cm was measured. A continuous decline in performance was recorded, while compared to Čillík et al. (2015), boys achieved an average value of 151.93 cm and Mandzák and Slováková (2018), when an average value of 146.7 cm was recorded. In girls, the average value of the parameter was currently 139 cm compared to the value of 144.06 cm recorded in Čillík et al. (2015) and the value of 145.2 cm, recorded in Mandzák and Slováková (2018). Again, a decline in performance was noticed, but due to the impact of the movement intervention program, a significant positive change was achieved in both, boys (153.2 cm) and girls (151.2 cm). An interesting finding is that, compared to the research of Lupo et al. (2022), who investigated the explosive strength of the lower limbs of the Turin pupils with the same test, current findings confirm higher performance for both, boys and girls in present pupils in the input testing.

Chronologically decreasing levels were also observed in the dynamic abdominal muscle strength parameter, as measured by the sit-ups test. While the results of Čillík et al. (2015) are known at the level of 19.75 in boys and 17.86 in girls, currently an average value of 18 in boys and 17.7 in girls was found. However, after the intervention, a significant improvement in the level of abdominal muscle strength skills was observed, namely boys improved by an average of 5.1 (23.1) and girls by 4.2 (21.9) repetitions per 30 s.

Pupils in Čillík et al. (2015) performed at a similar level in speed abilities as it was found in the current testing. In that year, boys and girls achieved an average time in the shuttle run of 12.8 s and 13.34 s, respectively. Currently, values at an average level of 13.5 s for boys and 13.3 s for girls were recorded. Through intentional intervention, an improvement of 0.5 s for boys and 0.3 s for girls was achieved.

The children's current level of endurance ability found indicates approximately the same level of performance that was measured in the research of Čillík et al. (2015). In the endurance shuttle run test, the actual boys achieved an average of 35.7 runs, compared to 37.08 in the aforementioned study. For girls, the current number of runs at 29.3 was measured, while in Čillík et al. (2015) it was 29.51. After the implementation of the movement program, an improvement was observed to a level of 40 crossing runs for boys and 33.8 for girls. Based on the above results, it can be concluded that the movement program, with the content of music and dance activities has a positive effect on the motor performance of the observed children.

During the application of the movement program, with the content of music and dance activities, an increased interest in physical activity associated with joy was found, which corresponds to the findings of Kouli et al. (2009), and Mischenko et al., (2023). The positive progress of movement abilities due to the influence of dance and aerobic activities in pupils of younger school age is also in accordance with other studies. For example, Kouli et al. (2009), specify an improvement in the strength/endurance of the abdominal muscles, flexibility of the muscles of the back and of the hip and an improvement in the strength of the hands. Effects of the FITT program on physical activity and health-related fitness in primary school age pupils (Cvejič & Ostojic, 2017) significantly contributed to the improvement of aerobic fitness, muscular fitness and partially flexibility. Velickovska, Gontarev, and Popovski (2022) researched the effects of innovative tandem hours on physical education on motor capacity of pupils in elementary school level. Experimental group achieved better results in motor tests: dynamometer 50 on the palm, standing long jump, sit-ups for 30 seconds and shuttle run 4x10 m. The findings of this study are consistent with the results obtained by Aldemir et al. (2011) in children of similar age, confirming a positive effect of dance activities on flexibility, coordination, dynamic balance, jump performance, agility, acceleration, and speed. Similar results were also reported by Mavridis et al. (2004) and Pantelić et al. (2019), albeit with slightly younger children. The key element that led to the improvement in the experimental group is stated to be the correct planning, organisation and implementation of the lessons, i.e. the correct and optimal choice of the type, duration, intensity and frequency of physical exercises.

Moreover, such programs contribute to pupils' cognitive and emotional development and significantly ameliorate kinetic skills (Ferdowski et al., 2010; Kriventsova et al., 2017).

The strength of the study is the fact that the results obtained are unique, as there are few studies that present the use of music-movement and dance activity in physical education for 9-10 years old pupils. Another advantage is the easy implementing a movement program into the teaching process at low cost.

Limitation of the study is the absence of a control group to determine the effect of the program and to generalize the conclusions.

Conclusions

This study was able to demonstrate the effect of a movement intervention program, containing music-movement, dance and aerobic activities, on the development of children's movement performance.

The effect of the implemented movement program and significant positive changes in the level of the observed movement abilities was confirmed: Boys demonstrated a higher level of trunk joint mobility with an average progression of 3.9 cm, which was confirmed as significant. In girls, was observed a significant improvement of 6.3 cm in the result of the given test). In explosive lower limb strength was found a significant improvement in boys, when there was an increase in power output by an average of 13.4 cm. The increase was higher than in girls, when girls achieved an increase by an average

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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