



■ Orijinal Makale / Original Article ■

### Investigation of the Effect of Capoeira Dance Education on the Dance Self-Efficacy, Happiness and Self-Confidence Levels of Disadvantaged Children Between the Ages of 7-13

7-13 Yaş Arası Dezavantajlı Çocukların Capoeira Dans Eğitiminin Dans Öz-Yeterliliği, Mutluluk ve Öz-Güven Düzeylerine Etkisinin Araştırılması

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### Abstract

The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of 8-week capoeira-based physical activity training given to children under the care of Social Services on their dance self-efficacy, happiness, and self-confidence levels. 12 boys and 15 girls, under protection at Kassel Street Yahya Kaptan and Çayırova Children's Homes affiliated with the Kocaeli Provincial Directorate of Family, Labor and Social Services, voluntarily participated. Capoeira training was conducted 1.5 hours a day, 2 days a week for 8 weeks, consisting of rhythmic movements and basic ginga patterns. Dance self-efficacy, self-confidence, and happiness scales were applied before and after the training. The data were evaluated statistically using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. A statistically significant difference was found only in the dance self-efficacy scores ( $p<0.05$ ), while no significant difference was found for self-confidence and happiness ( $p>0.05$ ). As a result, it was concluded that capoeira-based rhythmic movement activities positively affect children's perceived competence in dance, although no change was observed in their overall happiness or self-confidence levels.

**Key Words:** Child, dance, happiness, self-confidence, recursion

### Öz

Çalışmanın amacı, Sosyal Hizmetler bakımı altındaki çocuklara verilen 8 haftalık capoeira temelli fiziksel aktivite eğitiminin dans öz yeterliliği, mutluluk ve öz güven düzeylerine etkisini incelemektir. Araştırmaya Kocaeli Aile, Çalışma ve Sosyal Hizmetler İl Müdürlüğü'ne bağlı Kassel Sokak Yahya Kaptan ve Çayırova Çocuk Evleri'nde koruma altında olan 12 erkek ve 15 kız çocuğu gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Capoeira eğitimi, 8 hafta boyunca haftada 2 gün, günde 1.5 saat, ritmik hareketler ve temel ginga kalıplarından oluşan bir şekilde yapılmıştır. Eğitim öncesi ve sonrası dans öz yeterliliği, öz güven ve mutluluk ölçekleri uygulanmıştır. Veriler, Wilcoxon işaretli sıra testi kullanılarak istatistiksel olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Sadece dans öz yeterliliği puanlarında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunurken ( $p<0.05$ ), öz güven ve mutluluk puanlarında anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır ( $p>0.05$ ). Sonuç olarak, capoeira temelli ritmik hareket aktivitelerinin çocukların dans konusundaki algılanan yeterliliklerini olumlu yönde etkilediği, ancak genel mutluluk ve özgüven düzeylerinde bir değişiklik gözlenmediği sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çocuk, dans, mutluluk, özgüven, özyineleme

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to negative circumstances such as family-related reasons, economic and emotional limitations, when the child's care and protection cannot be provided, the state takes responsibility through social service institutions and organizations. These institutions, affiliated with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and operated by the General Directorate of Child Services, are authorized to arrange and manage all socialization activities such as the shelter, education, development, and rehabilitation of children who lack family structure and are in need of care (Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2011).

All children, without disregarding their individual characteristics, economic and emotional conditions, are considered in need of protection from the moment of birth until they reach adulthood, from a legal perspective. In a broader sense, a child in need of protection is defined as an individual who experiences problems stemming from mental, physical, or social communication difficulties, is in an unhealthy developmental process, and is under threat of security, due to various reasons, including inadequacy in meeting their basic needs for care and shelter (Salim, 2011).

In Article 3(b) of Law No. 2828 on Social Services, a child in need of protection is defined as a child "whose physical, mental, and moral development or personal safety is at risk; 1. Without a mother or father, 2. Whose mother or father or both are unknown, 3. Abandoned by their mother and father or both, 4. Neglected by their mother or father and exposed to social dangers and bad habits such as prostitution, begging, alcohol or drug abuse, and left to wander freely" (MBS, 2014).

The idea that dance holds an important place in human life is very common. This importance stems not only from being an activity that entertains people in their free time but also from being a form of non-verbal communication. From the beginning of human life to the present day, people have used dance as a means to express and convey their emotions, thoughts, experiences, and knowledge. Dance has its own unique dynamics and the ability to communicate these dynamics through various tools. In this way, it is a form of communication in itself (Yanık, 2010).

Dance has its own special language and a unique form of communication. It is argued that dance, nourished by culture, originates from the movements of living beings as well as from humans' social needs (Brinson, 1980).

The application of artistic techniques enhances students' performance and improves their behavior. By using certain methods, dance therapy aims to regulate dysfunctional emotions such as stress, anxiety, sadness, and guilt before and after therapy. It also increases positive feelings like self-esteem (Hanna, 2020). In addition to these explanations, studies on dance emphasize that the definition of dance highlights it as an educational model that contributes to the development of socialized, communicative, cooperative, cultured, healthy, vibrant, self-expressive, sensitive, kind, and productive individuals (Lin, 2005).

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When we examine different types of dance, it is noticeable that they come in various forms. In this study, Capoeira, which is classified as a freestyle dance, is the focus of the applications.

Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art that uniquely integrates rhythmic movement, music, and physical expression. Although it is often perceived as a dance due to its musical and acrobatic components, it fundamentally originates as a traditional system of combat and self-defense. Similar to Wushu Taolu, Capoeira incorporates music and stylized motion, but the underlying framework is rooted in martial principles rather than performative dance. Its movements—such as ginga, kicks, sweeps, and acrobatics—are built upon combat mechanics, and the training structure includes ritualized but non-competitive physical interaction. The art form also serves as a cultural expression, combining resistance, identity, and bodily discipline (Almeida, 1996; Murphy, 2007).

In early childhood education, music and dance training are believed to help children express their emotional states, allow them to accept socially disapproved but personally felt desires through music and dance, facilitate their adaptation to social environments, experience their imaginative thoughts, improve communication skills with peers during the egocentric stage, and contribute to their understanding of their physical condition and perspectives on the opposite sex (Chodorow, 1991; Sudak, 2012; Çatay, 2013).

Dance not only enhances individuals' social adaptation but also supports their development to a significant extent. This adaptation also brings about many spiritual benefits. One of the most important is the feeling of happiness while dancing. Professor Dr. Şermin Tekinalp's question: "Does a happy person dance, or does dancing make a person happy?" is akin to the question: "Does body language reflect an individual's true emotional state, or does dance unconsciously put the individual into a different emotional state?" It can be said that this is true from both perspectives (Akgül, 2006).

While dancing, the rhythmic influence reflects the emotional state through body movements, and if body language is used actively, the desired feelings can be expressed as an external manifestation of the current emotions. The sense of happiness that comes with dancing can increase the desire to dance. This is because any activity that provides happiness can lead to addiction through the desire to engage in it more. Dance is a non-verbal form of communication that allows the expression of the body's weaknesses, aesthetics, grace, emotions, psychology, culture, and feelings. While body language is 55% effective in self-expression, verbal communication is only 7% effective. Actively using our bodies integrates us into society by 55% without doing anything else (Akyıldız & Açıkada, 2011). Dance is a visual art expressed through the body and requires the necessary physical competence (Akyıldız & Açıkada, 2011). Dance involves physical fitness, cardiovascular endurance, and muscular development, including endurance, strength, and power, as well as performance aspects like speed, flexibility, reaction time, balance, agility, and overall physical fitness. These characteristics are significant for performance and health, thus expressed as performance-related physical capacity and health-related physical fitness (Özter & Özer, 2001).

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research Group (Population and Sample)**

The population of the study consists of boys and girls under protection and care at the Kassel City Yahya Kaptan Child Homes Site and the Çayırova Child Homes Site, both affiliated with the Kocaeli Provincial Directorate of Family, Labor and Social Services during the 2018-2019 academic year. The sample of the study includes 15 girls (age  $11 \pm 1.73$  years, height  $131.33 \pm 5.81$  cm, average body weight  $28.93 \pm 5.59$  kg) and 12 boys (age  $9.83 \pm 1.64$  years, height  $130.4 \pm 10.52$  cm, average body weight  $27.16 \pm 4.96$  kg), totaling 27 voluntary students.

To conduct the research, ethical approval was obtained from the Clinical Research Ethics Committee of Kocaeli University with decision number KÜ GOKAEK 2019/04.03, as well as permission from the Kocaeli Provincial Directorate of Family, Labor and Social Services.

**Research Design:** In this study, the "experimental model," which is frequently used and evaluated as a quantitative research model, was employed.

### **Data Collection/Processing:**

#### **Dance Self-Efficacy Questionnaire**

A 34-item, 5-point Likert-type scale developed by Tokinan & Bilen (2011) was used to evaluate participants' self-efficacy in dance-related tasks. The rating scale includes: "Always (5), Usually (4), Neutral (3), Rarely (2), Never (1)". The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.95, indicating high internal consistency.

The scale includes statements about an individual's perceived ability to perform rhythmic movements, adapt to music, and manage dance sequences. Notably, some items also reference prior experience or education in dance, which may pose a limitation when applied to participants with no formal dance training background, such as the children in this study.

Despite this, the scale has been successfully adapted in previous research involving novice or beginner-level participants, particularly in educational and recreational settings where structured dance curricula were newly introduced (Tokinan & Bilen, 2011; Sezince & Kolburan, 2018).

In this study, the scale was administered before and after the 8-week training to assess changes in perceived competence. Its use was deemed appropriate based on its sensitivity to educational interventions and its ability to capture growth in self-perceived efficacy, regardless of initial dance experience.

#### **Self Esteem Questionnaire**

The self-esteem scale developed by Akin (2007) is used to measure individuals' levels of self-esteem. The self-esteem scale consists of a total of 33 items. It is a 5-point Likert scale, with the highest possible score being 165 and the lowest being 33. Scores of 3.5 and above indicate high self-esteem, scores between 2.5 and 3.5 indicate moderate self-esteem, and scores below 2.5 indicate low self-esteem. This scale has two sub-dimensions: Internal self-esteem includes items numbered (1-3-4-5-7-9-10-12-15-17-19-21-23-25-27-30-32). It assesses characteristics related to an individual's self-confidence, such as self-love, the ability to think positively and openly, setting personal goals, and recognizing one's own strengths and weaknesses. External self-esteem includes items numbered (2-6-8-11-13-14-16-18-20-22-24-26-28-29-31-33). It evaluates aspects related to confidence in social interactions and external environments, such as effective communication, the ability to express oneself well, controlling emotions, and making risky decisions. The internal consistency coefficient for the entire scale is 0.83, with 0.83 for internal self-esteem and 0.85 for external self-esteem. The test-retest reliability coefficients are 0.94 for the entire scale, 0.97 for internal

self-esteem, and 0.87 for external self-esteem. In our study, the reliability coefficient of the self-esteem scale is 0.946 for the entire scale, 0.907 for internal self-esteem, and 0.894 for external self-esteem (Doğru Z., 2017).

### Happiness Questionnaire

The Happiness Questionnaire is used to measure individuals' levels of happiness. The happiness scale is unidimensional and consists of a total of 6 items. This scale is prepared as a 5-point Likert type, with the reliability coefficient calculated as Cronbach alpha internal consistency of 0.83. The total item correlations on the scale range from 0.45 to 0.65. An exploratory factor analysis conducted to evaluate the construct validity of the scale identified a unidimensional structure with an eigenvalue of 3.248, explaining 54% of the total variance. The factor loadings of the items on the scale range from 0.59 to 0.78.

### Capoeira Training Program and Implementation

The study involved an 8-week Capoeira training program conducted twice a week, 1.5 hours per session, in the gymnasiums of the respective institutions. Capoeira, while often perceived externally as a dance, is in fact a Brazilian martial art that integrates music, rhythm, and combative movements, much like Wushu Taolu, which is performed with music but maintains its martial essence.

In this study, the Capoeira training did not include "roda" formations (circle-based partner practice commonly used in traditional Capoeira settings), and was conducted in a linear group format. The training consisted primarily of Ginga (basic movement pattern), along with selected fundamental Capoeira techniques, such as defensive and acrobatic maneuvers. These were practiced without a partner or direct combat simulation and focused on rhythm, coordination, and body control in harmony with music.

The purpose of including Capoeira was not to simulate combat but to utilize its structured physical movements and rhythmic components to support psychological outcomes such as self-confidence, self-efficacy, and emotional well-being. Prior to and following the training program, participants completed the relevant self-report questionnaires.

### Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS 22.0 software. Normality tests were conducted, and since the data did not follow a normal distribution, nonparametric tests were used. The Wilcoxon test was employed for pre-test and post-test comparisons. The data were evaluated at a 95% confidence interval with a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ .

## 3. FINDINGS

**Table 1.** Frequencies and percentages of participants' gender, number of siblings, and years spent in the institution

		F	%
Gender	Male	12	44.4
	Female	15	55.6
Number of Siblings	No Siblings	6	22.2
	1 Sibling	2	7.4
	2 Siblings	8	29.6
	3 Siblings	4	14.8
	4 Siblings	1	3.7
	5 Siblings	2	7.4
	6 Siblings	2	7.4
	7 Siblings	2	7.4
Years in the Institution	1 Year	13	48.1
	1,5 Years	3	11.1
	2 Years	4	14.8
	2,5 Years	1	3.7
	4 Years	4	14.8
	5 Years	1	3.7
	8 Years	1	3.7

**Table 2.** Mean and standard deviation values for dance self-efficacy, self-confidence, and happiness levels of participants

	<i>N</i>	<i>Pre-Test Mean ± SD</i>	<i>Post-Test Mean ± SD</i>
Dance Self-Efficacy	27	3.3 ± 0.58	3.8 ± 0.58
Self-Confidence		3.31 ± 0.64	3.31 ± 0.56
Happiness		3.73 ± 1.04	3.97 ± 0.90

**Table 3.** Statistical Values of Pre-Test and Post-Test Measurements for Dance Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, and Happiness Levels of the Participants

	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Dance Self-Efficacy Pre and Post Test	-2.691	<b>0.007*</b>
Self Confidence Pre and Post Test	-0.012	0.99
Happiness Pre and Post Test	-1.321	0.187

\*p<0,01

Table 3 shows that when comparing the pre-test and post-test values of the research group, a statistically significant difference was found in the parameters of dance self-efficacy ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, no significant differences were observed for self-confidence and happiness scores between the pre-test and post-test measurements ( $p > 0.05$ ).

It should be noted that the comparisons were made using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which evaluates whether there is a significant difference between two related samples. Therefore, using the term "relationship" is statistically incorrect in this context.

Additionally, comparisons such as between self-confidence pre-test and happiness post-test or between happiness pre-test and post-test as a 'relationship' indicator are methodologically inappropriate within this design. These types of interpretations would require correlation analysis (e.g., Spearman correlation) rather than Wilcoxon testing. Since no such correlation analysis was performed, these expressions were removed to prevent misinterpretation.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The benefits of learning dance in child development are highlighted through its impact on physical development and self-confidence. Qualitative research shows that dance education contributes to muscle development in children, working their arm, leg, neck, and body muscles. In this context, dance education can be considered an exercise method for children. In terms of self-confidence development, performing dance in front of peers allows children to showcase their performance with strong self-confidence, free from anxiety. It has been observed that dancing children become more independent in decision-making and develop resilience in noisy social environments. These findings suggest that learning dance is an effective tool for revealing children's potential and that these skills can benefit their lives (Hartono et al., 2024).

The impact of creative activities on the health and overall well-being of children aged 11-18 was examined. Based on the studies conducted by Daykin and colleagues between 2004 and 2011, research was reviewed on community or extracurricular activities such as music, dance, singing, drama, and visual arts, excluding art, drama, and music therapies. Among the 20 reviewed articles, six were quantitative, eight qualitative, and six mixed-method studies. Due to the diversity of the studies and methods, a general synthesis could not be made; thus, the findings were categorized under sexual health, obesity, mental health, and emotional well-being. Despite methodological weaknesses in many studies, creative activities were found to have positive effects on behavior changes, self-confidence, self-esteem, knowledge levels, and physical activity (Bungay et al., 2013).

The study investigated how students receiving intensive dance education were affected by it. By comparing the differences between students who received dance education and those who did not, the study examined students' self-perception, overall well-being, and academic performance (cumulative GPA, absenteeism, and behavior). The study included 90 high school students selected from three public schools in Florida. Participants completed an online survey in computer labs or classrooms. The survey included demographic information, cumulative GPA, six questions from national educational research scales (related to

absenteeism and behavior), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Perceived Well-Being Scale for Adolescents. Data were evaluated using correlation and variance analyses (ANOVA). Significant differences were found between students who received dance education and those who did not in terms of perceived well-being, self-perception, and cumulative GPA. The study found a positive effect of dance education on academic achievement; however, students receiving dance education also required additional interventions for healthier well-being and self-perception (Carter, C. S., 2004).

The impact of creative dance education on the self-confidence of children at Ibunda Preschool was examined. The study used a phenomenological approach to understand the experiences and perceptions of children during the creative dance program. Data collection involved participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Fifteen preschool children from Ibunda Preschool participated in the study. The results showed that creative dance increased children's self-confidence. Additionally, it was observed that children's social skills, willingness to work in groups, and self-expression abilities developed during this process. Progress was also noted in children's initiative-taking and independent action. These findings further emphasize the importance of art education in early childhood education and its contribution to children's psychosocial development (Amalia et al., 2024).

People with self-confidence are generally happier and more successful in life. Those who lack self-confidence may feel worthless, incompetent, and unsuccessful, and may struggle with social integration and self-expression. This can lead to psychological issues. Therefore, individuals with low self-confidence should focus on areas that help them integrate into society, gain self-confidence, and improve their well-being (Tercan, 2016).

Dance is one such field that provides a valuable platform for personal development. It creates a social environment that resembles a play setting, where individuals can gain important skills such as being part of a community, communicating, trusting, sharing, and collaborating. This fosters the growth of individuals who are respectful, cooperative, and capable of effective social interaction (Temel & Temel, 2016).

Engaging in dance enhances self-confidence and brings joy to individuals. Given its positive psychological effects, dance can aid individuals in overcoming their problems. Whether practiced individually or in a group, dance boosts confidence and has a significant impact on communication and social bonding. In addition to its psychological benefits, dance has physiological effects as well. It allows individuals to move according to their natural instincts, promotes physical development, and improves overall well-being. Dance helps those who are socially withdrawn, feeling psychologically distressed, or struggling with communication to connect more easily with others and integrate into society (Tercan, 2016).

In our study, a statistically significant difference was found only between the pre-test and post-test scores for dance self-efficacy ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, no statistically significant differences were observed in the scores for self-confidence and happiness ( $p > 0.05$ ).

These results indicate that while capoeira-based rhythmic activities may enhance perceived competence in dance-related movements, they were not sufficient to produce measurable improvements in self-confidence or happiness levels within the scope and duration of this study.

Tercan (2016) reported that dancing and improving one's sense of well-being are progressively interconnected, with individuals increasingly inclined to dance as they feel better. The study highlighted that dancing has a significant impact on socialization, leading to positive changes in posture, self-expression, and group interaction. It also noted that dance enhances self-confidence, increases interest in dancing, improves quality of life, and helps individuals better integrate into society, thereby increasing happiness.

According to Temel and Temel (2016), there is a significant relationship between cognitive skills and learning through movement, with dance being one of the most effective ways to develop motor skills from a young age. They found that starting dance education in preschool contributes significantly to individual and bodily development, fosters creativity in future generations, enhances learning abilities, and helps build healthier social relationships through increased self-confidence.

Terlemez (2019) examined the impact of sports activities on self-confidence, serotonin, and dopamine levels. The study found that engaging in physical activity increases happiness hormones, which positively affects self-confidence. Increased serotonin levels contribute to a sense of courage, while higher dopamine levels also enhance self-confidence and courage. Participation in sports was associated with an increase in serotonin levels and a decrease in psychological issues.

Tokinan and Bilen (2011) explored the effects of creative activities in dance, games, and music classes on music teacher candidates. Their findings indicated that these activities significantly impacted motivation, self-confidence, body language, and dance self-efficacy among the candidates.

Sezince and Kolburan (2018) investigated the impact of music and dance education on motivation, physical, and psychological development in children aged 3-6. They found that music and dance positively influenced physical and psychological development, motivation, self-confidence, and class participation. The effects varied by gender and age group.

Okyar (2015) assessed the impact of 12 weeks of partner dancing (tango and salsa) on physical fitness parameters, including height, weight, body mass index, leg strength, hand grip, flexibility, vertical jump, anaerobic measurement values, and body fat percentage. Significant differences were observed in all physical fitness parameters in the dancing group compared to the control group ( $p < 0.01$ ), with no significant differences in the control group ( $p > 0.01$ ).

These studies collectively support the notion that dance has multifaceted benefits, including enhancing physical fitness, psychological well-being, and social skills, and suggest that dance education should be integrated into various stages of development for optimal benefits.

Based on the studies conducted, we observe that our results show similar outcomes regarding self-confidence and happiness.

Various studies on children in social institutions have evaluated them in terms of psychological well-being, security, and social belonging. These studies have reported an increase in behavioral problems, internalization issues, and delays in visual-spatial, language, and general cognitive functions, as well as physical and motor development compared to children living with their families. Additionally, it has been identified that children under protection face significant issues concerning their sense of security (Fidan et al., 2013; Çakı, 2019).

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that capoeira-based rhythmic movement activities contributed significantly to the improvement of children's dance self-efficacy. A statistically significant difference was found between pre-test and post-test scores in this dimension.

However, no significant improvements were observed in self-confidence or happiness levels following the 8-week intervention. These results suggest that while such structured physical activities may enhance perceived competence in dance-related movements, they may not be sufficient on their own to produce measurable emotional or psychological changes in children under protection.

It is important to consider that the duration, intensity, and content of the program, as well as the children's initial psychological states, may limit broader effects. Thus, future interventions aiming for improvements in self-confidence and emotional well-being should consider integrating longer-term programs, complementary psychosocial support, or individual counseling components, especially for disadvantaged child populations.

Based on these findings, it is recommended to support children in care institutions through a variety of developmentally appropriate, structured, and consistent programs that address both physical and psychosocial development. Such initiatives may help foster positive behavioral, emotional, and cognitive outcomes, contributing to a more confident, healthy, and socially integrated future for these children.

## 6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

**Conflict of interest:** *There isn't conflict of interest among the authors.*

**Financial support:** *There isn't financial support was reported by the authors.*

**Ethics Approval:** *The authors declare that the article complies with national and international research and publication ethics. In case of a contrary situation, the **Journal of Sport and Recreation Research** has no responsibility, and all responsibility belongs to the authors of the article.*

**Ethics Committee Approval:** *This study was prepared with the approval of Kocaeli University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee (Decision number: 2019/23).*

**Informed Consent:** *Informed consent was obtained for the voluntary participation of the participants.*



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