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Developing Dance Sport Model for Children Aged 7-12

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Abstract

Background and Aim: Dance Sport is important because it promotes physical fitness, coordination, and artistic expression while instilling discipline and teamwork. It also increases the cultural value of dance by making it a competitive, professional sport with global recognition and participation. The study aimed to develop a dance exercise model specifically tailored for children aged 7-12 in Guangdong Province through qualitative research.

Materials and Methods: The research employed interviews with 19 experts, guided by Buridge and Rickeymore's theory of managerial functions in organizational planning. The study selected a sample group that included dance association leaders with at least 5 years of experience (4 participants), dance instructors with 5 years of teaching experience (5 participants), children's dance champions with 3 years of experience (5 participants), and fitness professionals with 5 years of experience working with children (5 participants). Data was evaluated on a 5-point scale, and the Delphi technique was utilized for consensus building through two rounds of expert meetings, using median statistics (MDN) and interquartile range (IR) for data analysis.

Results: The research identified key elements in the development of a strategic planning model for children's dance exercise programs, including policy formulation, SWOT analysis, the use of the TOWS Matrix, and the design of dance steps and training sequences appropriate for children. The model emphasized fostering motivation, promoting physical development, reducing the risk of childhood obesity, and encouraging leadership and teamwork among young participants. The study recommended organizing training systems to measure children's physical fitness, practicing basic ballroom and Latin dance styles, and ensuring a balanced mix of indoor and outdoor activities. Health and safety protocols, such as having medical personnel available during sessions, were also emphasized. The model included warm-up and cool-down routines, balance practice, stress management techniques, and rhythm-based training sequences tailored to children's developmental needs. Additionally, the research recommended monitoring heart rates before and after exercise, evaluating children's physical capabilities, and promoting overall well-being. Through group discussions with pediatric health experts, the model was further refined to better address the needs of children in this age group. Pre- and post-exercise physical tests, evaluations using the PDCA cycle, and adjustments to training intensity and balance were implemented to ensure a safe and effective dance program for children.

Conclusion: The study successfully developed a comprehensive dance exercise model for children aged 7-12, integrating strategic planning, health monitoring, and physical fitness practices. This model provides a structured approach to promoting physical health, coordination, and emotional well-being among children in Guangdong Province.

Keywords: Model; Dancing; Children; Guangdong; Exercise

Introduction

In recent years, China has placed significant emphasis on building a healthier nation, as outlined in the "State Council's Opinions on Implementing Healthy China Actions" (July 15, 2019). One of the main objectives of this directive is the implementation of health promotion programs in primary and secondary schools. These guidelines underscore the crucial role of maintaining physical and mental well-being for students during their critical growth and development periods. The promotion of healthy living habits and physical fitness at a young age is essential to achieving the goals of the Healthy China initiative. Notably, the importance of fostering physical health among primary and secondary school students is highlighted as a key component in realizing these goals (Liang et al. 2022).

For children, sports dance training plays a pivotal role in improving poor posture, developing aesthetic body lines, enhancing physical fitness, and promoting mental well-being. Moreover, it addresses psychological issues like "learning anxiety" and "loneliness" (Fong Yan et al. 2024). Given its multifaceted benefits—ranging from fitness to aesthetic education and economic value—sports dance has grown in popularity, particularly among children in primary and secondary schools. Sports dance competitions and training have also become widely integrated into school curricula, further promoting its significance (LaMotte, 2018). The flourishing sports dance scene has led to the establishment of children's sports dance courses across various provinces and cities in China. These

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courses aim to cultivate young talents, contributing to a pool of potential competitive dancers for the future. This trend has garnered attention on an international level, with Chinese dancers achieving notable success in global sports dance competitions (Crown Currency, 2010).

However, despite these advancements, there remain challenges in the current training practices. Many training methods lack diversity, relying on traditional approaches that no longer engage students effectively. To address these issues, the development of a scientifically sound training program is crucial for ensuring students' long-term success in sports dance (Morais et al. 2021). Sports dance in China has rapidly developed since its introduction in the 1980s, and Chinese dancers have made significant progress in international competitions. However, experts like Peter Maxwell, a Blackpool Dance Festival judge, note that there is still a gap between Chinese dancers and the world's top performers. This gap is particularly evident in areas such as movement quality, technical execution, and expressive elements (Stark et al. 2013). Improving basic technical skills at an early age is essential for addressing this disparity and promoting the overall development of sports dance in China.

To this end, developing a comprehensive sports dance training system for children aged 7-12 is imperative. Such a system will help improve not only physical qualities like balance, flexibility, and coordination but also cognitive functions and social cooperation skills (Hynes and Block. 2023). By optimizing the training of young dancers, this research aims to contribute to the long-term growth and high-quality development of children's sports dance in China.

Objectives

Main objective

To develop a dance exercise Model for children aged 7-12.

Subsidiary objectives

1. To study dance and exercise patterns of the children aged 7-12.
2. To create Model dance styles for exercise for the children aged 7-12.

Conceptual Framework

This study investigates the management practices involved in the development of a dance exercise model for children aged 7-12 in Guangdong Province, China. The research methodology incorporates expert interviews with 19 professionals in the field, guided by Bridge's and Roquermore's management function theory. This theoretical framework, which focuses on the core management functions of Planning, Organizing, Implementing, and Controlling provides a structured approach to designing an effective dance exercise model for young children.

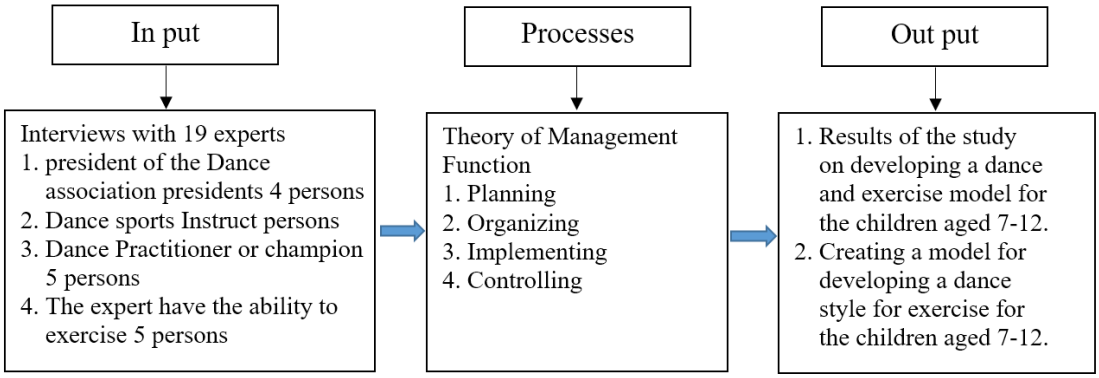

Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Methodology

1. Population: The population consisted of 21 individuals, including 1) Executives from children's dance associations with at least 5 years of management experience. 2) Experts in organizing and teaching children's dance with at least 5 years of experience. 3) Individuals who have demonstrated dance skills or are winners of children's dance competitions with at least 3 years of experience.4)

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Experts with knowledge in children's exercise science and physical development, each with a minimum of 5 years of experience.

2. Sample: A purposive sample of 19 individuals was selected from the population of 21, divided as follows: 1) Dance Association Management Experts: 4 individuals with at least 5 years of management experience, either current or former administrators of children's dance associations. 2) Dance Teaching Experts: 5 individuals with at least 5 years of teaching experience in children's dance. 3) Dance Ability Experts: 5 individuals with demonstrated dance skills or children's dance competition achievements with at least 3 years of experience. 4) Exercise Science Experts: 5 individuals with at least 5 years of experience in exercise science, specializing in children's physical development.

3. Scope of Research: This research focuses on studying and developing a dance exercise model specifically tailored for children aged 7-12 in Guangdong Province, China. The study aims to create a structured exercise model that supports children's physical fitness, coordination, and cognitive development through dance. The research also examines the potential benefits of incorporating physical and emotional well-being strategies to ensure a comprehensive developmental approach.

4. Research Tools: Structured Interviews: Initial interviews were conducted with 19 experts specializing in children's physical development and dance education. The interviews were focused on the management functions of Planning, Organizing, Implementing, and Controlling within the context of a children's dance exercise model. Rating Scale: A five-level rating scale was employed during the second round of interviews, based on responses from the first round, to assess the suitability and relevance of the content for children aged 7-12. If experts provided no further comments, data saturation was assumed, and no third round was necessary. Focus Group: After the second round, a focus group consisting of individuals with similar qualifications (but who were not part of the initial expert group) was conducted to seek consensus on the developed dance exercise model for children. Consensus Confirmation: The developed model was reviewed for appropriateness, safety, and feasibility. Median (Mdn) and interquartile range (IR) statistics were used to confirm expert consensus regarding the suitability of the dance exercise model for children.

5. Data Collection Process : (1) Relevant literature on children's physical education, specifically focusing on dance, was distributed to all 19 experts. (2) The first round of structured interviews was conducted based on management function theory, tailored for children's physical and emotional development. (3) A second round of interviews was administered using the five-level rating scale to gather feedback and assess the model's suitability for children. (4) If necessary, a third round of interviews was conducted to resolve any disagreements from the second round. (5) Focus groups were organized to further refine the model and reach a consensus on its applicability to children. (6) The data was then analyzed, and the final dance exercise model for children aged 7-12 was summarized.

6. Data Analysis and Statistical Methods: 1. Content Analysis: Qualitative data from the structured interviews were analyzed using content analysis to identify key themes regarding the development and implementation of the children's dance exercise model. 2. Group Discussion Evaluation: Data from the focus groups were evaluated to assess the overall suitability and practicality of the developed model. 3. Statistical Analysis: Expert responses from the second round of interviews were analyzed using the median (Mdn) and interquartile range (IR) to confirm consensus and ensure the model's applicability to children's physical fitness and development needs.

Results

This research aims to study and develop a dance exercise model tailored for children aged 7-12 in Guangdong Province, China. The analysis of the research data is presented in the following sections: Part 1: Analysis of Expert Opinions and Consistency, Part 2: Development of the Dance Exercise Model, Part 3: Suitability and Practical Feasibility, Part 4: Feedback on Suitability, Part 5: Implementation Steps, and Part 6: Practice Guidelines.

The study involved contributions from 10 experts who provided recommendations for developing a comprehensive dance exercise model for children in this age group. Their insights can be summarized as follows: 1. Strategic Planning: Experts emphasized the need for thorough strategic planning when developing a dance exercise model for children. This process should include conducting SWOT analyses and applying the TOWS Matrix to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

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Effective planning should align with the developmental goals of children and include strategies for organizing dance activities, creating age-appropriate groupings, and expanding participation among children. The goal is to ensure that the program is both engaging and developmentally beneficial. 2. Organization: Recommendations focused on forming a skilled team capable of managing various activities for children, both indoors and outdoors. A systematic approach is necessary, beginning with pre-practice steps such as fitness assessments to evaluate the children's readiness and physical condition. Organizing sessions should also consider the children's behavior in group settings and incorporate a variety of dance rhythms to stimulate interest and participation. Ensuring that children understand their roles and can perform safely within their capacity is a crucial component of successful program organization. 3. Practice: Experts suggested implementing appropriate fitness tests to ensure the physical readiness of the children before engaging in dance exercises. The design of dance routines should consider the children's developmental stages and capabilities. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of their physical and emotional responses during sessions are vital. Implementing testing systems such as SAT ST to assess posture and rhythmic execution is recommended. Incorporating cool-down periods and measuring heart rates before and after each session can help ensure that the exercises remain safe and effective. Correct posture and the gradual development of rhythm and balance should be integral parts of the routines. 4. Control: During the control phase, experts advised on safety measures to prevent injuries and ensure the children's well-being throughout the practice sessions. This includes regular assessments of physical fitness and proper group management to suit the varying abilities of the participants. The dance routines should be age-appropriate, emphasizing the development of balance, coordination, and rhythmic skills. The PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle should be employed for continuous monitoring and evaluation, allowing for necessary adjustments to the program. Ensuring safety and promoting a positive and enjoyable learning environment are the key priorities. (Picture 2)

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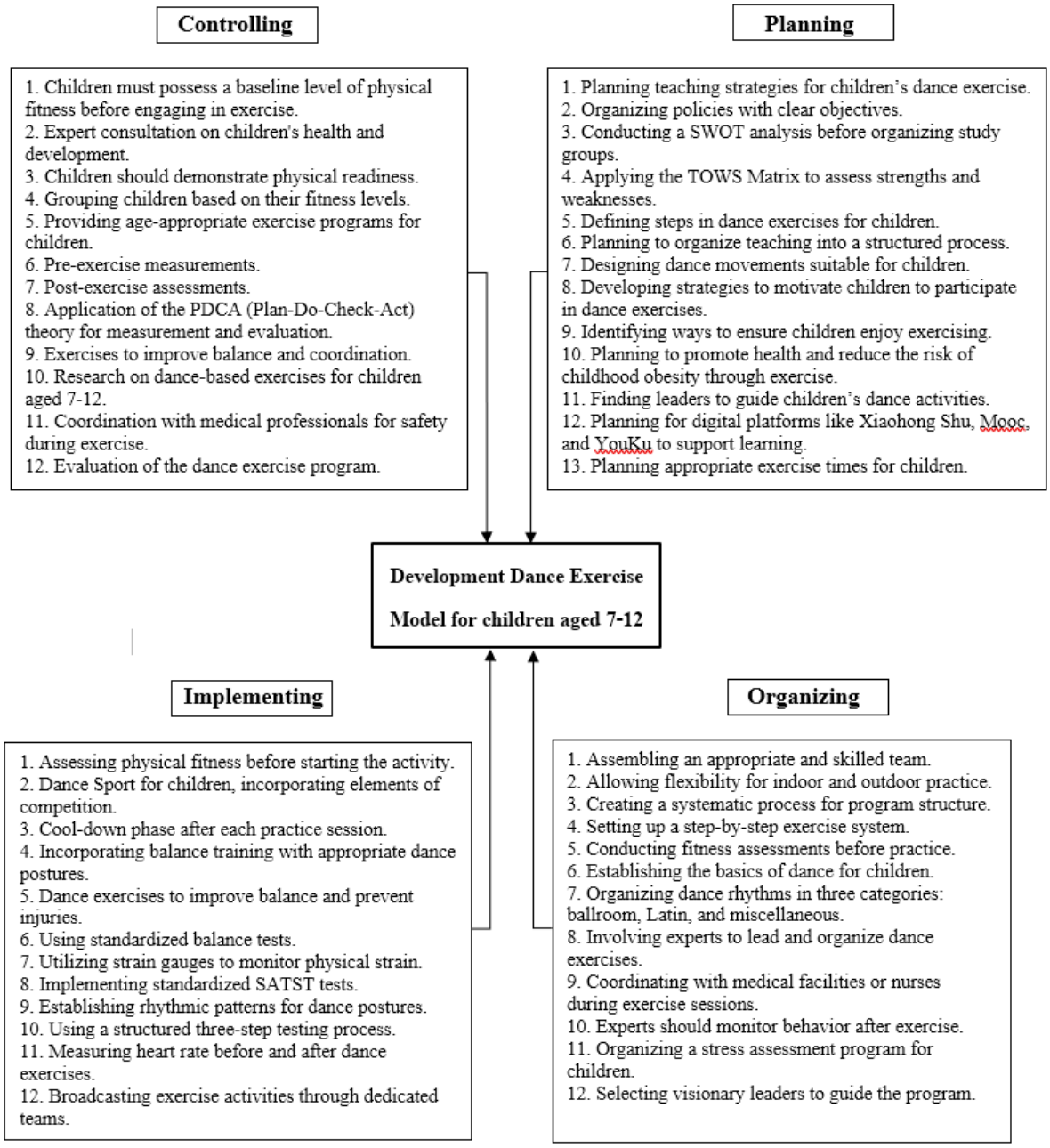

Figure 2 Model Development Dance Exercise Model for children aged 7-12

Conclusion

This study highlights the key elements in developing a dance exercise model for children aged 7-12 in Guangdong Province, China, focusing on planning, organization, implementation, control, and evaluation. The insights provided by experts emphasize the following: 1) Planning: Strategic planning is fundamental to the success of the dance exercise model for children. The development process should begin with a thorough SWOT and TOWS analysis to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Expert leaders should take advantage of digital platforms such as Xiaohong Shu, Mooc, and YouKu to enhance visibility and engagement with both children and parents. The final planning stages must involve the careful organization of teaching teams and structuring the exercise program to be adaptable for both indoor and outdoor environments. 2) Organization: A well-organized team is essential for the successful execution of the program. This team must oversee every aspect of the dance exercise process, from the initial physical assessments to monitoring progress during sessions. It is also

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important to have medical personnel or a nurse on hand for safety. Expert-led leadership with a clear vision for child development is crucial to maintaining program quality and ensuring the physical and mental well-being of participants. 3) Implementation: Before starting any exercise sessions, children should undergo a physical fitness test and participate in a proper warm-up. The use of standardized tests, such as those for balance and coordination, is critical for assessing each child's readiness and development. The implementation phase must include a structured system that progressively guides children through dance exercises, ensuring that all activities are age-appropriate, effective, and safe. 4) Control: Effective control mechanisms are necessary to maintain the safety and success of the dance program. This includes regular expert evaluations, grouping children according to their fitness levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced), and using standardized formats for assessments. The PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle should be used to guide ongoing evaluation and make necessary adjustments to the exercise model, ensuring its continuous improvement and adaptability.

This research underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach to planning, organizing, implementing, controlling, and evaluating to create an effective dance exercise model for children. Regular assessments and expert input ensure the model's adaptability, promoting physical fitness, balance, coordination, and overall well-being in children aged 7-12.

Discussion

1. Planning: Effective planning for developing a dance exercise model for children aged 7-12 requires strategic foresight and well-structured policies. This involves the following: Strategic Planning: Clear policies must be established for the exercise program, focusing on the physical and cognitive development of children. Conducting a SWOT analysis is essential to identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing system. According to Charlesworth. (1998), thorough planning ensures that program objectives align with the developmental needs of children, utilizing strengths such as their natural enthusiasm for physical activities to optimize outcomes. TOWS Matrix: Creating a TOWS Matrix can guide the development of the dance exercise model by outlining necessary steps and ensuring alignment with the program's goals. Viswanath and Agha. (2023) emphasize that adapting working methods and integrating child-friendly features into the program can enhance the effectiveness of the exercise model. This method ensures that policies not only address the children's physical needs but also engage their cognitive and emotional development through fun and creative activities. Exercise Guidelines: The movement patterns and exercise guidelines for children must be well-defined and age-appropriate. Lobelo et al (2020) suggest that selecting exercises suited to children's developmental stages is critical for improving physical fitness, coordination, and balance. Planning should include exercises that are enjoyable, safe, and led by skilled instructors who understand how to motivate and guide children through the activities. Media Utilization: Leveraging digital media platforms such as Xiaohongshu, MOOC, and Youku is recommended for promoting and broadcasting children's dance exercise programs. Moses (2023) highlights that using media platforms helps engage both children and their parents, encouraging participation and allowing for interactive learning. The scheduling of exercise sessions should consider school hours and children's energy levels, ensuring that sessions are held at times when children can fully participate, such as after school or during weekends.

2. Organizing: Effective organization is crucial for developing a successful dance exercise program for children aged 7-12. Key considerations include the following: Strong Team and Systematic Approach: A well-structured team is essential for managing both indoor and outdoor activities for children. The organization must implement a clear, step-by-step process to ensure that the exercise program follows a logical sequence. Musaigwa and Kalitanyi. (2024), a well-organized program with defined procedures helps prevent operational challenges and ensures smooth execution. Leaders and instructors play a pivotal role in managing and overseeing the various elements of the program, guiding to ensure a fun, safe, and educational experience for children. Structured Exercise Levels: The dance exercise program should be organized into progressive levels, starting with basic movements and advancing to more complex routines. O'Brien et al. (2021) emphasize that exercise intensity and difficulty must be tailored to the child's developmental stage and physical ability. Initially, the focus should be on fundamental movements, such as balance, coordination, and rhythm, progressing to more advanced steps as children's skills improve. This structured approach ensures safety and promotes

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gradual skill development. Fitness Testing: Before engaging in the dance program, children should undergo fitness assessments to evaluate their readiness for physical activity. These assessments help tailor the exercises to the individual's physical abilities and ensure the exercises are developmentally appropriate. Janssen and LeBlanc. (2010) highlights the importance of fitness testing in children's programs, noting that it helps prevent injuries and ensures the program aligns with each child's physical fitness level. Dance Rhythms and Expertise: The program should incorporate various dance styles, such as ballroom, Latin, and modern rhythms, to keep children engaged and help them develop a range of skills. It is crucial to have qualified instructors who are experienced in teaching these styles to children. Additionally, a trained medical professional, such as a nurse or first aid expert, should be present to handle any potential health issues or injuries during the sessions. According to Morrongiello et al. (2012), having expert guidance and medical supervision enhances the safety and effectiveness of children's physical activities. Monitoring and Stress Relief: Regular observation of participants during and after each session is necessary to ensure safety and address any concerns that arise. Children's physical and emotional responses to exercise should be closely monitored to identify signs of fatigue or discomfort. A permanent stress-relief or relaxation component, such as cool-down stretches or mindfulness activities, should be integrated into the program. Li et al. (2022) suggest that monitoring children's emotional responses during physical activity is crucial to fostering positive attitudes toward exercise and preventing burnout.

3. Implementing: Effective implementation of a dance exercise program for children aged 7-12 requires several key steps to ensure safety, engagement, and physical development. Physical Fitness Testing: Before participating in dance exercises, it is essential to conduct a physical fitness assessment. This ensures that the exercises are appropriate for the child's fitness level, reducing the risk of injury and promoting healthy development. Seton et al (2019) emphasize the importance of warming up before practice and cooling down afterward. A structured warm-up prepares the child's body for physical activity by enhancing flexibility and circulation, while a cool-down helps to relax muscles, prevent stiffness, and aid recovery. Balance Training: Incorporating balance training is vital for young dancers, especially when learning more complex movements in rhythms such as Latin dance. Balance exercises help children improve coordination and stability, key components of physical development. Szabo. (2021) support the use of standardized balance exercises for children, noting that early training in balance and coordination can enhance motor skills and reduce the risk of falls or injuries. Standardized Programs and Safety: The dance exercise program should include standardized assessments to measure physical fitness and monitor children's physical responses during activities. Logan et al. (2019) highlight the importance of safety-focused programs for children, especially during high-energy activities like dance. Standardized programs help ensure that exercises are appropriate for the age group, minimizing risk and promoting physical development. Monitoring Pulse and Progress: Regular monitoring of children's pulse rates before and after exercise is important for assessing cardiovascular health and physical exertion. Tracking pulse rates helps instructors understand how the body is responding to exercise and allows for adjustments to the intensity if needed. Winsley (2002) notes that if a child's pulse is unusually low before exercise or excessively high afterward, it indicates that adjustments to the program may be required to ensure the safety and well-being of the participant. Team Leadership: Effective leadership is crucial for guiding safe and engaging exercise sessions for children. Leaders must be skilled in working with children, ensuring that the exercises are appropriately scaled to match their developmental needs while maintaining an element of fun and creativity. According to Adair. (2021), team leaders should focus on delivering exercises that are challenging yet accessible, promoting both physical fitness and enjoyment for young participants.

4. Controlling: Effective control of a dance exercise program for children aged 7-12 involves several critical components to ensure safety, engagement, and effectiveness. Pre-Exercise Physical Testing: Before participating in dance exercises, children should undergo a thorough fitness assessment to evaluate their physical readiness. This is important to ensure that children are physically capable of performing the exercises without undue risk. Emery. (2018) emphasizes that participants must be physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared for physical activity to ensure the exercises achieve the desired outcomes. Without proper readiness, children could experience fatigue or injury, which would detract from the benefits of the program. Expert Analysis: Experts should evaluate whether each child

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is suited to the planned exercise regimen, taking into account their developmental stage and physical capabilities. This analysis helps ensure that the exercises are age-appropriate and match the child's abilities. Collard et al. (2010) note the importance of assessing physical readiness to prevent injuries and ensure exercises are performed correctly, as improper exercise could negatively impact physical development and motor skills. Group Classification and Measurement: Children should be classified—beginner, intermediate, and advanced—based on their physical condition and skill level. Accurate measurement and evaluation before exercise sessions are crucial to determine if a child is ready to participate in specific routines. Group classification helps tailor the dance exercise program to each child's ability, ensuring both safety and appropriate skill progression. Faigenbaum et al (2020) highlight that categorizing children based on fitness levels allows for more effective instruction and better outcomes. Evaluation Using PDCA: The PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) methodology should be applied to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the dance exercise program. This approach helps instructors assess the program's success and make necessary adjustments. Tabacchi et al. (2019) support the use of standardized evaluation methods to monitor progress and maintain balance in children's physical activities. PDCA ensures continuous improvement and ensures that children's needs are met throughout the program. Emergency Preparedness: The exercise program should include protocols for emergency preparedness, with coordination between instructors and medical professionals or trained personnel on-site to handle emergencies. This ensures that any unforeseen incidents can be managed promptly, maintaining the safety and well-being of the children during exercise sessions. Tao et al. (2022) stress the importance of having medical support readily available, particularly during high-energy activities like dance. Ongoing Research and Evaluation: Continuous research is vital to ensure that the exercise methods are appropriate for children and contribute positively to their physical development. Ha et al. (2023) emphasize that ongoing research allows for the refinement of the exercise models and helps keep the program up-to-date with the latest developments in child physical education. Regular evaluation ensures that the program remains effective, enjoyable, and safe for the children involved.

Recommendation

1. Adaptation for Other Age Groups: The developed dance exercise model for children aged 7-12 can be adapted for use with different age groups or populations, such as younger children or adolescents. This would involve adjusting the complexity and intensity of the exercises to match the developmental stage and physical abilities of each group. For younger children, exercises could focus more on basic motor skills and coordination, while for older children or adolescents, the program could incorporate more advanced movements and higher-intensity activities to promote fitness and skill development.

2. Incorporation of Varied Music Rhythms: The use of different musical rhythms and styles should be explored to increase engagement and enjoyment in the dance exercise program. Introducing a variety of music genres—such as pop, hip-hop, classical, and world music—can cater to the diverse preferences of children. This approach can enhance the fun factor, making the program more attractive and encouraging long-term participation. Research shows that children are more likely to stick with an exercise program when they enjoy the music and movements, which can also positively impact their physical and emotional development.

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