

USFD Journal

of Physical Education Pedagogy & Sports Performance

Lampos Publishing OPC · Peer-Reviewed · Open Access

Vol. 2 (2) · June 2026

3082-5725 (Online) · DOI prefix 10.64339/USFD-

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Self-Efficacy and Movement Competency: Correlates of Dance Performance

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RECEIVED May 13, 2026

PUBLISHED June 15, 2026

ACCEPTED May 26, 2026

DOI 10.64339/USFD-w71n0n27

CITE AS Galla, F. (2026). Self-efficacy and movement competency: Correlates of dance performance. *USFD Journal of Physical Education Pedagogy & Sports Performance*, 2(2), 234–245. <https://doi.org/10.64339/USFD-w71n0n27>

ABSTRACT

Dance is a key Physical Education (PE) learning area that integrates physical literacy, cultural expression, and socio-emotional development, yet many adolescents experience uneven readiness to perform. This study examined the relationships of self-efficacy in dance and movement competency with dance performance among 110 Grade 7 students in public secondary schools on Camiguin Island, Philippines. Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory and Dynamic Systems Theory, the study determined whether these psychological and motor-related factors are associated with performance outcomes in a PE context. A descriptive-correlational design was employed. Data were collected using a dance-adapted self-efficacy scale, a modified Movement Competency Screen (MCS), and a rubric-based Dance Performance Scale. Because Shapiro-Wilk tests indicated non-normal distributions, Spearman's rho was used for the correlational analyses, which were based on the 109 students with complete data across all variables. Students generally demonstrated high self-efficacy, fair movement competency, and an approaching-proficiency level of dance performance. Self-efficacy in dance was weakly but significantly associated with dance performance ($r_s = .226$, $p = .018$), whereas movement competency showed a negligible, non-significant association ($r_s = -.008$, $p = .935$); the null hypothesis for self-efficacy was rejected and that for movement competency was retained. These results suggest that, in this setting, learners' confidence beliefs relate to dance performance more than general movement quality does, although the weak magnitude indicates that performance remains a multidimensional, emergent construct shaped by additional technical, expressive, and cognitive factors. The restricted variability of performance scores should be considered when interpreting the magnitude of these relationships. The study recommends re-investigating these variables in the same or other contexts, with greater attention to performance-score variability, for confirmation.

KEYWORDS Dance Performance, Self-Efficacy, Movement Competency, Physical Education, Adolescents, Descriptive-Correlational Study

Introduction

Dance occupies a central place in contemporary Physical Education because it simultaneously advances physical literacy, creativity, psychosocial development, and cultural understanding. Within the Philippine Department of Education's K to 12 Physical Education curriculum, dance is positioned not merely as performance but as a multidimensional learning experience that strengthens coordination, body control, teamwork, and self-expression among learners (Department of Education [DepEd], 2016). For adolescents, especially in school settings, dance provides opportunities to cultivate physical competence while also supporting emotional expression and social belonging. Beyond its curricular role, dance has been linked to well-being, identity formation, and social connectedness, making it an important developmental context for young people (Burkhardt & Brennan, 2012; Lakes, 2005; Quiroga Murcia *et al.*, 2010). However, despite dance's recognized educational value, substantial variation exists in how effectively students engage in and perform dance-related tasks.

A growing body of literature suggests that psychological variables, particularly self-efficacy, may shape students' performance in movement-based domains. Rooted in Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to organize and execute the actions required to achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). In educational and performance contexts, stronger self-efficacy has consistently been associated with greater persistence, motivation, emotional regulation, and task engagement (Lei *et al.*, 2022; Supervía & Quílez-Robres, 2021). Within dance settings, students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to persevere through difficult choreography, manage performance anxiety, and demonstrate stronger confidence during execution (Hsia & Hwang, 2020; Huang *et al.*, 2022; Zhou *et al.*, 2023). Conversely, low self-efficacy may inhibit participation, reduce confidence, and undermine performance quality. These findings suggest that self-belief may be a meaningful contributor to dance performance, yet its role among ordinary secondary school learners remains underexplored.

In addition to psychosocial factors, movement competency represents another potentially important determinant of dance performance. Movement competency refers to the ability to execute movement patterns with coordination, control, stability, and efficiency (Benoît-Piau *et al.*, 2021, 2022). Theoretical perspectives such as Dynamic Systems Theory emphasize that motor performance emerges from the interaction of multiple physical and cognitive systems, making foundational movement quality important for complex performance tasks. In dance, competencies such as balance, flexibility, rhythm, and neuromuscular coordination are essential for technical execution and injury prevention (Callahan & Mangum, 2024; Shaw *et al.*, 2021). Research has demonstrated associations between movement quality and biomechanical preparedness in dancers (Long *et al.*, 2021; Mancini, 2025), but evidence directly linking movement competency to school-based dance performance remains limited and inconsistent.

Although existing scholarship has contributed significantly to understanding dance, self-efficacy, and movement development, several gaps remain. Much of the literature has focused on elite dancers, university students, or therapeutic populations rather than ordinary adolescents enrolled in Physical Education classes (Benoît-Piau *et al.*, 2021; Hsia & Hwang, 2020). Furthermore, many studies prioritize isolated technical or biomechanical assessments without sufficiently examining authentic, rubric-based dance performance, which includes creativity, expression, technical quality, and synchronization (Sato, 2022). This creates an important gap in understanding how psychological confidence and foundational movement quality relate to classroom dance outcomes, particularly in geographically specific and resource-limited contexts such as rural Philippine schools.

Addressing this gap is particularly relevant in Camiguin, an island province where contextual limitations in training access, structured dance exposure, and extracurricular opportunities may shape students' dance experiences differently from urban or specialized populations. Investigating dance performance in this setting may provide more context-responsive evidence regarding how self-efficacy and movement competency function within regular school environments. Such inquiry also aligns with broader educational and public-health priorities, including Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), by informing more inclusive, developmentally appropriate, and evidence-based Physical Education programming (United Nations, 2015).

Taken together, Social Cognitive Theory and Dynamic Systems Theory frame the present inquiry: the former predicts that learners' confidence beliefs support engagement and persistence in dance, while the latter situates dance performance as an emergent product of interacting motor and cognitive subsystems. The study therefore positioned self-efficacy and movement competency as plausible correlates of dance performance and examined whether each was associated with rubric-based performance among Grade 7 learners enrolled in Physical Education classes on Camiguin Island. By doing so, it aimed to contribute context-specific evidence that may guide Physical Education teachers in designing instruction that strengthens both students' confidence and movement capabilities in support of more meaningful dance learning.

Statement of the Problem

The study examined the relationships of self-efficacy and movement competency with dance performance. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the participants' level of self-efficacy in dance?
2. What is the participants' level of movement competency?
3. What is the participants' level of dance performance?
4. Are self-efficacy in dance and movement competency significantly associated with dance performance?

Hypotheses

Based on research question 4, the following null hypotheses were tested:

Ho₁ Self-efficacy in dance is not significantly associated with dance performance.

Ho₂ Movement competency is not significantly associated with dance performance.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships of self-efficacy in dance and movement competency with the dance performance of Grade 7 students. The design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to systematically describe participants' levels across the three variables and to determine whether significant associations existed among them without manipulating any conditions (Derotas & Barcelona, 2023; Tobias & Diego, 2022). Descriptive components established the levels of self-efficacy, movement competency, and dance performance, while correlational analysis determined the direction and magnitude of the relationships of self-efficacy and of movement competency with dance performance. Because the study focused on naturally occurring characteristics within an educational setting rather than on experimental intervention, the findings are interpreted as associations rather than as causal effects.

Participants were Grade 7 junior high school students enrolled in Physical Education classes in a public secondary school in Camiguin Province during the 2024–2025 academic year. Total enumeration sampling was used, wherein all eligible students were invited to participate. Inclusion criteria required participants to be officially enrolled Grade 7 students, approximately 12 years old, physically capable of performing dance-related tasks, with at least 80% attendance, and willing to provide informed assent alongside parental consent. Students were excluded if they withdrew voluntarily, failed to submit required consent documents, had physical or medical limitations that prevented safe participation, or had conditions that could compromise data validity. Under total enumeration, 110 Grade 7 students completed the study measures; accordingly, the descriptive statistics in Tables 1–3 are reported for all 110 students who completed each measure, whereas the correlational analyses (Tables 4–5) were based on the final sample of 109 students with complete data across all three variables.

Three contextualized instruments were used. Self-efficacy in dance was measured using an adapted version of the New General Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Chen *et al.* (2001), modified to reflect dance-related contexts while retaining its eight-item, 5-point Likert structure. Movement competency was assessed using the Movement Competency Screen (MCS) based on Benoît-Piau *et al.* (2022), which evaluated movement quality through squat, lunge-and-twist, bend-and-pull, push-up, and single-leg-squat tasks. Following the source instrument, primary areas of concern (shoulders, lumbar spine, hips, and ankles/feet) were weighted $\times 2$ and secondary concerns (head, knees, depth, and balance) $\times 1$ across the test positions, yielding a maximum possible concern score of 83; scores were then reverse-coded (83 minus observed concerns) so that higher values indicate greater movement competency. Dance performance was measured using a modified Dance Performance Rating Scale adapted from Sato (2022), assessing creativity, expression and interpretation, impression, technical quality, and synchronization through a 5-point rubric. All instruments were contextualized for age appropriateness and school relevance while maintaining alignment with their original constructs.

Instrument validity and reliability were supported by established psychometric evidence and pilot testing. The New General Self-Efficacy Scale has demonstrated strong construct validity and reliability across educational settings (Chen *et al.*, 2001). The MCS has shown acceptable inter-rater and intra-rater reliability in prior studies (Mann *et al.*, 2022), and Sato's (2022) dance rubric demonstrated acceptable reliability across performance dimensions. Prior to full implementation, pilot testing assessed clarity and feasibility, and the adapted Self-Efficacy in Dance Scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .754, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Data gathering followed strict ethical procedures, including approval from the Lourdes College Research Ethics Committee, institutional permissions, informed assent and consent, confidentiality safeguards, and adherence to the principles of Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research [NCPHSBBR], 1979). Data collection proceeded in three sequential phases: administration of the Self-Efficacy in Dance questionnaire, implementation of the Movement Competency Screen, and rubric-based dance performance assessment rated by both the researcher and the classroom teacher for triangulation.

Descriptive statistics—frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation—were computed for all 110 students who completed each measure to answer the first three research questions. Because Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that the data departed from normality ($p < .05$), Spearman's rho (r_s), a nonparametric measure that operates on ranked data and is robust to non-normal distributions and outliers, was used to examine the associations of self-efficacy and of movement competency with dance performance among the 109 students with complete data. The significance level was set at .05.

Results

Problem 1. What is the participants' level of self-efficacy in dance?

Table 1 presents the distribution of participants' self-efficacy in dance as frequencies and percentages across the defined interpretive ranges.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Level of Self-Efficacy in Dance Among Grade 7 Students

Range	Interpretation	f	%
4.51 – 5.00	Very High Self-Efficacy	3	2.73
3.51 – 4.50	High Self-Efficacy	81	73.64
2.51 – 3.50	Moderate Self-Efficacy	26	23.64
1.51 – 2.50	Low Self-Efficacy	0	0.00
1.00 – 1.50	Very Low Self-Efficacy	0	0.00
Total		110	100.00
Mean		3.86	
Interpretation		High Self-Efficacy	
SD		0.40	

Item-level means and standard deviations for the Self-Efficacy in Dance Scale are presented below.

Item	Mean	SD	Description
1. I will be able to achieve most of the dance-related goals that I set for myself.	4.25	0.58	High Self-Efficacy
2. I believe I can succeed in most things I decide to pursue in dance.	3.75	0.93	High Self-Efficacy
3. When I face challenges in dance, I am confident I can overcome them.	4.10	0.82	High Self-Efficacy
4. I feel confident in my ability to handle a variety of tasks in dance.	4.09	0.58	High Self-Efficacy
5. When facing difficult tasks in dance, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	3.96	0.75	High Self-Efficacy
6. I am confident that I can learn and perform dance routines effectively.	3.52	0.88	High Self-Efficacy
7. Compared to others, I believe I can perform dance tasks very well.	3.31	0.96	Moderate Self-Efficacy
8. Even when I find a dance performance difficult, I can do quite well.	3.86	0.80	High Self-Efficacy

Note. N = 110. f = frequency; percentages are based on the 110 students who completed this measure.

Most participants demonstrated High Self-Efficacy in Dance, with 81 students (73.64%) falling within 3.51–4.50. This was followed by 26 students (23.64%) with Moderate Self-Efficacy and a small proportion of 3 students (2.73%) with Very High Self-Efficacy. No participants fell within the Low or Very Low categories. The overall mean self-efficacy score was 3.86 (SD = 0.40), corresponding to a High Self-Efficacy interpretation. On average, students held strong beliefs in their ability to learn, perform, and overcome challenges in dance activities during their Physical Education classes.

At the item level, the highest-rated statement concerned achieving self-set dance goals (M = 4.25, SD = 0.58), whereas the lowest-rated item concerned comparison with others (M = 3.31, SD = 0.96), the only item interpreted as Moderate Self-Efficacy.

Problem 2. What is the participants' level of movement competency?

Table 2 presents the distribution of students' movement competency, with the overall mean and standard deviation.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Movement Competency of Grade 7 Students

Range	Interpretation	f	%
72.9 – 83.0	Outstanding	0	0.00
52.1 – 72.8	Very Good	1	0.91
31.3 – 52.0	Good	34	30.91
10.5 – 31.2	Fair	72	65.45
0.0 – 10.4	Poor	3	2.73
Total		110	100.00
Mean		27.93	
Interpretation		Fair	
SD		8.19	

Note. N = 110. f = frequency; percentages are based on the 110 students who completed this measure.

Most participants, 72 students (65.45%), were classified as Fair, followed by 34 students (30.91%) as Good. One student (0.91%) reached the Very Good level and 3 students (2.73%) were classified as Poor, while no participants attained the Outstanding level. The overall mean of 27.93 (SD = 8.19) corresponds to a Fair level of movement competency, indicating that, on average, students demonstrated moderate ability in performing fundamental movement patterns. The concentration of scores in the Fair range, with a moderate standard deviation, suggests some variability but a general tendency toward mid-level performance rather than high proficiency.

Problem 3. What is the participants' level of dance performance?

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for students' dance performance.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Dance Performance of Grade 7 Students

Range	Interpretation	f	%
4.51 – 5.00	Advanced	0	0.00
3.51 – 4.50	Proficient	13	11.82
2.51 – 3.50	Approaching Proficiency	95	86.36
1.51 – 2.50	Developing	2	1.82
1.00 – 1.50	Beginner	0	0.00
Total		110	100.00
Mean		3.21	
Interpretation		Approaching Proficiency	
SD		0.20	

Component-level means and standard deviations are presented below.

Component	Mean	SD	Description
Creativity	3.38	0.49	Approaching Proficiency
Expression and Interpretation	3.10	0.52	Approaching Proficiency
Impression	3.05	0.34	Approaching Proficiency
Technical Quality	3.05	0.40	Approaching Proficiency
Synchronization	3.45	0.57	Approaching Proficiency

Note. N = 110. f = frequency; percentages are based on the 110 students who completed this measure.

Most participants (95 students, 86.36%) were classified as Approaching Proficiency, followed by 13 students (11.82%) at the Proficient level. Only 2 students (1.82%) were classified as Developing, and no participants were classified as Beginner or Advanced. The overall mean was 3.21 (SD = 0.20), interpreted as Approaching Proficiency. The very small standard deviation indicates limited variability, with most students' performance closely clustered within the same interpretive range.

At the component level, all aspects of dance performance were rated within the Approaching Proficiency category. Synchronization obtained the highest mean (M = 3.45, SD = 0.57), followed by creativity (M = 3.38, SD = 0.49), expression and interpretation (M = 3.10, SD = 0.52), impression (M = 3.05, SD = 0.34), and technical quality (M = 3.05, SD = 0.40). These results indicate broadly comparable performance across expressive, technical, and coordination-related components.

Problem 4. Are self-efficacy in dance and movement competency significantly associated with dance performance?

Spearman's rho was used because the Shapiro–Wilk test indicated non-normal distributions ($p < .05$); the nonparametric coefficient operates on ranked data and is more robust to non-normality and outliers, providing a more appropriate estimate of the relationships. As shown in Table 4, self-efficacy in dance had a weak but statistically significant positive association with dance performance, $r_s = .226$, $p = .018$. Because p was below the .05 criterion, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected: students with higher self-efficacy in dance tended to demonstrate better dance performance, although the weak magnitude indicates that self-efficacy alone does not fully explain performance.

Table 4

Spearman's Rho Correlation Between Self-Efficacy in Dance and Dance Performance

Variables	Dance Performance
Self-Efficacy in Dance	$r_s = .226^*$, $p = .018$

Note. r_s = Spearman's rho; p = probability value; N = 109. *Significant at the .05 level.

Table 5 presents the association between movement competency and dance performance. Movement competency had a negligible, non-significant association with dance performance, $r_s = -.008$, $p = .935$. The null hypothesis (H_{02}) was therefore cannot be rejected: variation in movement competency was not associated with variation in dance performance among the participants.

Table 5

Spearman's Rho Correlation Between Movement Competency and Dance Performance

Variables	Dance Performance
Movement Competency	$r_s = -.008$, $p = .935$

Note. r_s = Spearman's rho; p = probability value; N = 109. ns = not significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

The participants reported a high level of self-efficacy in dance, suggesting that most students believed they could learn, perform, and overcome challenges in dance activities. This is consistent with Bandura's (1997) view that self-efficacy influences motivation, persistence, and task engagement, and with Lei *et al.* (2022), Huang *et al.* (2022), and Zhou *et al.* (2023), who emphasized that confidence, encouragement, and repeated

participation strengthen learners' performance-related self-efficacy. Notably, the lowest-rated item concerned comparison with peers, suggesting that students' confidence was stronger in relation to personal effort and goal achievement than to perceived technical superiority—a pattern also observed by Huang *et al.* (2022) and Lin *et al.* (2022).

In terms of movement competency, participants obtained a fair level, indicating basic movement capacity with room for improvement in balance, coordination, flexibility, stability, and body control. This aligns with Kwan *et al.* (2023), Ng and Button (2023), Lopes *et al.* (2020), and Morano *et al.* (2020), who described movement competency as a multidimensional construct developed through consistent physical activity and quality instruction. The concentration of students in the Fair category may reflect limited exposure to structured movement training, formal dance preparation, or skill-focused Physical Education activities. Because dance requires coordinated movement, rhythm, posture, and controlled transitions, students with only moderate movement competency may find technically demanding routines difficult, consistent with Benoît-Piau *et al.* (2021, 2022).

Dance performance was generally at the approaching-proficiency level, indicating that students had developed basic performance skills but had not yet reached proficient or advanced mastery. This is consistent with Chen (2023) and Wang *et al.* (2020), who observed that school-based dancers often perform at moderate levels because technical and expressive skills are still developing. Among the components, synchronization and creativity received relatively higher ratings, while expression and interpretation, impression, and technical quality were comparatively lower—suggesting that students were more comfortable with group coordination and creative movement than with emotional projection, stage presence, and precise technical execution (Basso *et al.*, 2021; Ladda *et al.*, 2020; Laroche *et al.*, 2024; Schiavio *et al.*, 2024).

The correlational analyses revealed a weak but statistically significant positive association between self-efficacy in dance and dance performance ($r_s = .226$, $p = .018$), leading to rejection of H_{01} , whereas movement competency showed a negligible, non-significant association ($r_s = -.008$, $p = .935$), so H_{02} was retained. The significant self-efficacy result is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory and with prior work linking self-efficacy to dance outcomes through motivation, engagement, and emotional confidence (Hsia & Hwang, 2020; Jia & Zhang, 2025; Li *et al.*, 2022); its weak magnitude, however, indicates that confidence is only one of several contributors to performance. The non-significant movement-competency result aligns with cautions that movement screens may index movement quality and injury risk more than performance (Cavaggioni *et al.*, 2023; Vehrs *et al.*, 2021), and with the multidimensional nature of dance, which also draws on creativity, expression, synchronization, memory, and stage presence beyond general movement quality (Benoît-Piau *et al.*, 2021; Long *et al.*, 2021; Mancini, 2025). Together, the findings suggest that dance instruction should build learners' confidence while also developing expressive, rhythmic, and technical movement skills.

Limitations

Several limitations qualify these findings. First, dance-performance scores were highly homogeneous ($SD = 0.20$, with 86.36% of students in a single interpretive band); such restriction of range attenuates correlations and likely contributed both to the weak magnitude of the significant self-efficacy association and to the near-zero movement-competency coefficient, so future studies should use performance measures and rubrics that capture greater variability. Second, self-efficacy was assessed through self-report, which may be subject to response bias and may not fully reflect actual confidence. Third, the Movement Competency Screen evaluates general movement patterns and may not capture the specific technical and expressive demands of dance performance. Fourth, the study used total enumeration in a single public school on one island province, which supports contextual relevance but limits generalizability. Fifth, the cross-sectional, correlational design

precludes causal inference. These limitations should be weighed when interpreting the findings and planning replication.

Conclusion

This study concluded that self-efficacy in dance was weakly but significantly associated with dance performance among Grade 7 students (H_{01} rejected), whereas movement competency was not (H_{02} retained). Participants generally demonstrated high self-efficacy, fair movement competency, and an approaching-proficiency level of dance performance. The findings suggest that, in this context, learners' confidence beliefs relate to dance performance more than general movement quality does, though the weak association indicates that performance also draws on a broader set of technical, expressive, cognitive, and social factors. The restricted variability of performance scores should be considered when interpreting the magnitude of these relationships.

The findings nonetheless support attending to both psychological and physical dimensions of dance instruction in Physical Education. Teachers are encouraged to provide positive feedback, progressive practice, peer support, and confidence-building activities while also integrating movement preparation, rhythm training, technical refinement, and expressive performance tasks. Future studies may examine additional factors—such as musicality, rehearsal exposure, emotional engagement, feedback quality, and dance-specific movement skills—and should use performance measures with greater variability to better explain students' dance performance and to confirm the relationships reported here.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Acknowledgements: The researcher extends his sincere gratitude to Almighty God for His wisdom and grace, to his thesis mentor, professors, and panellists for their invaluable guidance and support, and to his family and loved ones for their unwavering love and encouragement, to whom all glory is humbly offered.

Funding: This research received no external funding and was supported solely by the personal resources of the primary author.

Ethical Approval: The study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of Lourdes College, Inc., the researcher's academic institution, in accordance with the ethical standards outlined in the Belmont Report. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring full ethical compliance.

AI Declaration: This study utilized artificial intelligence tools to assist in preparing this article. Specifically, ChatGPT was used to convert the full thesis manuscript into a reduced journal article format, with human supervision and editing, to ensure academic rigor and integrity. Additionally, ChatGPT and Grammarly AI were used to enhance the language quality, clarity, and tone of the final manuscript. The author carefully reviewed and edited all outputs to maintain scholarly standards.

Data Availability Statement: The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Requests for access will be evaluated in accordance with ethical guidelines and data privacy policies.