



Social Dancing as Embodied Practice: Localization and Community Functions in the Southern Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Social dancing is an important yet understudied form of physical culture in Philippine community life. This qualitative case study examined how Western-originated social dances were adapted and sustained in communities across the Southern Philippines, focusing on their roles in physical activity, social connection, and cultural continuity. Eighteen participants, including dancers, instructors, organizers, and cultural workers, were engaged through semi-structured interviews, participant observation at twelve dance events, and document review. Thematic analysis identified four key dimensions, namely cultural adaptation through local music and movement, inclusive participation across diverse groups, institutional support from schools and local governments, and psychosocial benefits such as well-being, identity affirmation, and community bonding. The findings indicate that social dancing functions as an accessible physical recreation while also supporting cultural transmission and community cohesion. The study contributes to scholarship on physical culture in Southeast Asia and offers implications for physical education, community health, and cultural preservation.

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INTRODUCTION

Physical culture refers to the socially situated ways in which movement is practiced, interpreted, and transmitted within communities. Rather than viewing physical activity as purely biological, this perspective emphasizes its embeddedness in history, culture, and social relationships (Eichberg, 1998). Dance occupies a particularly revealing position within this field, as it combines physical exertion, social interaction, and cultural expression (Payne & Costas, 2020). Furthermore, skilled movement in dance involves not only the execution of technique but also embodied reflection and awareness, where meaning emerges through lived and bodily engagement (Foultier, 2021; 2023). Examining dance as an embodied practice, therefore, offers insight into how movement sustains identity and social relationships within communities.

In the Philippine context, dance has long been recognized as a medium of cultural continuity and collective memory. Scholarship has extensively examined indigenous, folk, and festival traditions (Reyes-Aquino, 2019; Celeste, 2017; Ness, 2016; Villaruz, 2018), establishing dance as central to the formation of national and regional identity. At the same time, research in dance and health demonstrates its contributions to physical fitness and psychosocial well-being (Fong Yan et al., 2018; Skinner, 2013; Karkou et al., 2023). These insights are particularly significant given declining physical activity levels and the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases in the Philippines (Cagas et al., 2022), highlighting the potential of culturally meaningful movement practices as sustainable forms of physical activity.

Despite this body of work, Philippine dance research has mainly focused on staged, indigenous, and competitive forms. In contrast, social dancing, particularly Western-originated partner dances, such as waltz, foxtrot, cha-cha, and swing, practiced in informal and community-based settings remains comparatively understudied (Uba, 2007). Existing studies tend to focus on urban ballroom or competitive circuits, with limited attention to everyday intergenerational participation. This imbalance constrains understanding of how global dance forms are adapted, localized, and sustained in lived community contexts.

This gap is especially evident in the Southern Philippines, a region characterized by cultural plurality and dynamic social interactions. Social dance events in barangays, schools, and civic spaces continue to engage participants across generations and socioeconomic backgrounds (Namiki, 2018). However, there remains a limited systematic analysis of how these Western-origin dances are locally adapted, how participation is organized and maintained, and how participants interpret their social, cultural, and health-related significance. As a result, social dancing is often treated as a peripheral form of recreation rather than recognized as a meaningful form of physical culture.

Addressing this gap, the present study examined non-competitive, non-staged social dancing in the Southern Philippines as an embodied, socially embedded practice. This study focused on how these dances are experienced in everyday community contexts rather than formal performance or competition settings. Specifically, the study aimed to examine how Western-originated social dances are adapted and localized within community settings in the Southern Philippines, the factors that shape participation across different age groups, genders, and social backgrounds, participant understanding of the social, cultural, and health-related functions of social dancing, and the institutional and community networks that

support the continuity of these practices. By foregrounding everyday social dance, this study contributes to a more analytically grounded understanding of physical culture as locally negotiated, socially sustained, and culturally meaningful practice.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine social dancing in the Southern Philippines as a socially embedded, context-dependent phenomenon. A case study approach is appropriate for investigating how and why practices occur in real-world settings, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are fluid (Yin, 2018). Consistent with its exploratory aims, the study was situated within a constructivist paradigm, which understands knowledge as socially constructed through lived experience and interaction (Lincoln & Guba, 2016).

Study Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in selected urban and peri-urban areas in the Southern Philippines, including Davao City, Tagum City, Digos City, and Panabo City, where active social dance communities are present. These sites provided diverse settings, including community events, schools, and informal practice spaces. A total of 18 participants were recruited through purposive sampling (Campbell et al., 2020) based on the following criteria: (a) having at least two years of engagement in social dancing, (b) being involved in dance practice, instruction, organization, or cultural work, and (c) being willing to participate in interviews and observation. Participants included dancers, instructors, educators, organizers, and cultural officers, representing varied ages, genders, and levels of experience. Sample size was guided by the principle of information power (Malterud et al., 2016), with recruitment continuing until sufficient depth and variation of data were achieved.

Data Collection

Data were collected over nine months using three complementary methods, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document review. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data source, focusing on participant experiences of learning and practicing social dance, perceived changes over time, and interpretations of its meanings and functions. Interviews were conducted in English, Cebuano, or Filipino, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim.

Participant observation was conducted across twelve social dance events, including community dance nights, classes, and festival performances. Field notes documented movement practices, interaction patterns, and contextual features of events. Document review included event materials, local government cultural plans, school curricula, and media content related to dance. These documents provided contextual and triangulated data on how social dancing is represented and supported institutionally.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Analysis proceeded iteratively through familiarization, inductive coding, and theme development. The initial open coding identified meaningful segments grounded in participant accounts. These codes were then compared and grouped into broader categories through constant comparison across interviews, observations, and documents. Categories were subsequently

refined into higher-level themes by examining patterns, relationships, and underlying meanings across the dataset. The resulting themes represent interpretive constructs that integrate individual experiences with broader social and cultural processes. NVivo software supported data organization, while analytic memo-writing documented coding decisions and theme development. Trustworthiness was enhanced through prolonged engagement, triangulation of multiple data sources, and member checking.

Reflexivity

The researcher positionality as someone engaged in physical culture and community-based practices informed both data collection and interpretation. Familiarity with dance contexts facilitated participant access and rapport, while also requiring critical reflection to avoid taken-for-granted assumptions. Reflexive journaling was maintained throughout the study to examine how the researcher perspectives and interactions may have shaped the research process and interpretation of findings.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained through anonymization and secure data handling. The study prioritized respectful engagement and accurate representation of participant experiences.

RESULTS

Analysis of interviews, field observations, and documents revealed four interconnected dimensions of social dance in the Southern Philippines, namely cultural adaptation, expanded participation, institutional support, and psychosocial functions. These themes elucidate how dance persists as a dynamic, locally grounded practice. Cultural adaptation enhances relevance and accessibility, while expanded participation broadens engagement. Institutional support provides resources and legitimacy and psychosocial benefits sustain long-term involvement. These dimensions reinforce one another, forming a resilient system that supports continuity and change.

Theme One: Cultural Adaptation of Colonial Dance Forms

Western-origin dances have been transformed through integration with local cultural elements, making them emotionally and socially resonant for Filipino communities.

1.1 Musical Localization

Participants consistently highlighted the substitution of Western orchestral music with Filipino songs, especially love ballads and folk-influenced compositions, which enhanced emotional engagement and cultural meaning.

"When you dance to a Visayan love song, the steps might be the same as ballroom class, but the feeling—that is ours. The music carries memories, words we understand, emotions that connect to our lives." (Female dancer, 47)

"My grandmother taught me to dance using old Filipino songs. She said the steps were from somewhere else, but the heart of dancing was here. When I hear those songs now, even if I am dancing standard waltz, I feel connected to her, to our family, to being Filipino." (Male dance instructor, 35)

Observations confirmed this preference. Local songs dominated community dance events, eliciting expressive, connected movement from participants. This adaptation made dance feel less foreign and more inviting to newcomers while reinforcing cultural identity among experienced dancers.

1.2 Movement Sensibilities

Dance movements were also subtly reshaped, reflecting local aesthetic and social values. Community dancers emphasized connection, enjoyment, and fluidity over rigid technique.

"We dance a little differently here. Maybe it is more relaxed, less stiff. Cha-cha here has more hip movement, more playfulness. It is still recognizable as cha-cha, but it is our version." (Female dance instructor, 52)

"In competition, everything is precise, like the angle, that timing. Here, we dance for connection. If the step is not perfect but we are both smiling, that is good dancing." (Male community dancer, 63)

1.3 Aesthetic Integration

The visual dimension of dance also reflected local adaptation. Participants described how costumes and presentation had evolved to incorporate Filipino aesthetic sensibilities, moving beyond the strict formal wear associated with traditional ballroom.

"For our festival presentation, we designed costumes with local fabric, colors that mean something here. Dance was a ballroom technique, but the look was Mindanao. That combination felt right. It showed both where dance came from and who we are now." (Female costume designer, 42)

Observations at festival events confirmed this integration, with performers combining ballroom movements with costumes, props, and staging referencing local culture. These hybrid presentations appeared to serve both internal and external audiences, affirming local identity for community members while presenting distinctive regional culture to visitors.

Theme Two: Participation Across Social Boundaries

Social dance in the Southern Philippines is inclusive across generations, socioeconomic status, gender, and ability, reinforcing community cohesion.

2.1 Generational Bridging

Dance events regularly included participants from teens to their seventies, with intergenerational pairing fostering instruction, mentorship, and shared family experiences.

"What I love is seeing grandfathers dancing with granddaughters, teenagers dancing with lolas (grandmothers). Where else do you see that? Dance floor becomes a space where age does not separate people as it brings them together." (Female community organizer, 54)

"My father taught me to dance. Now I teach my children. When we go to community dance night, three generations of our family are on the floor together. That is something special. We are not just dancing, we are being family." (Male dancer, 44)

2.2 Economic Accessibility

Low-cost or free events, minimal equipment requirements, and informal mentorship made participation feasible for all, in contrast to commercialized dance contexts.

"Anyone can come. You do not need expensive shoes or fancy clothes. You do not need lessons first. You can learn as you go. The only requirement is wanting to dance." (Female barangay organizer, 56)

"When I started, older dancers just took me in, showed me steps, danced with me until I learned. Nobody charged anything. That is how it works here. You learn, then you teach others." (Male dancer, 33)

This ethos of mutual support and open access stood in contrast to more commercialized dance contexts, where instruction and participation require significant financial investment. Participants expressed pride in this accessibility, viewing it as a reflection of community values of sharing and inclusion.

2.3 Gender Inclusivity and Disability

Local practice allows flexible partnerships, including same-gender and role-swapping arrangements, and accommodates dancers with disabilities.

"Sometimes we have more women than men. So women lead. It is not a problem because we just dance. Important thing is dancing, not who leads." (Female dancer, 36)

"I was nervous about how I would be received in dance spaces. Would people expect me to fit male or female roles? However, everyone has been accepting. I dance how I am comfortable, with whoever wants to dance with me. That acceptance means everything." (Non-binary dancer, 31)

Several participants noted the inclusion of dancers with disabilities in community events, describing dance as adaptable to various abilities.

"We have a dancer who uses a wheelchair. He dances with anyone willing to learn. We adjust—maybe the movements are different, but connection and joy, that is the same. He is part of our dance community like anyone else." (Female dance organizer, 52).

Theme Three: Institutional Support and Recognition

Institutional embedding through schools, local government, and organizations legitimizes dance, provides resources, and facilitates sustainability.

3.1 Integration into Education

Dance is incorporated into curricula and extracurricular programs, reaching students who might not thrive in traditional academic or athletic contexts. The training-of-trainers approach enabled rapid dissemination across schools.

"When I started teaching PE twenty years ago, dance was optional, not emphasized. Now it is part of our regular curriculum. Students learn waltz, cha-cha, swing—not just steps but also social skills, cooperation, cultural context." (Female PE teacher, 55)
"Students who struggle in other areas sometimes excel in dance. A boy who cannot sit still in class might be graceful on the dance floor. A shy girl who rarely speaks might express herself beautifully through movement. Dance reaches students in ways academics sometimes cannot." (Male dance coach, 43)

3.2. Local Government and Organizational Support

Municipal and city governments increasingly recognized social dance as worthy of support. This recognition took various forms, such as providing venues for community dance events, funding festival presentations featuring dance, supporting competitions and performances, and including dance in cultural programming.

"Our city government provides a covered court for our weekly dance night. They help with the sound system, lighting, and sometimes snacks for participants. Without that support, we could not sustain the event. With it, we have a thriving dance community." (Female community organizer, 54)
"When the mayor dances at the festival, it shows everyone that this matters. It is not just personal entertainment. It is part of who we are as a city. That recognition encourages more people to participate, more organizations to support dance." (Male cultural officer, 48)

Beyond government, various organizations supported social dance. Dance studios offered instruction and practice space. Community organizations sponsored events. Informal networks connected dancers across cities and barangays, facilitating exchange and mutual support.

"We are not formally organized, but we have connections. Dancers from different cities know each other. When there is an event somewhere, word spreads. We support each other's events, share what we are learning, and keep the community connected." (Male dancer, 37)
"Support comes and goes. When there is a supportive official, things happen. When that person leaves, support might disappear. We need more stable, ongoing commitment, not just depending on individuals." (Female dance advocate, 45)

Theme Four: Psychosocial Functions of Dance Participation

Dance supports emotional well-being, identity affirmation, social connection, and intergenerational knowledge transfer, contributing to its resilience and significance.

4.1 Emotional Wellbeing and Healing

Participants described dance as therapeutic, providing release, focus, and joy, particularly in times of personal challenge.

"After my husband died, I did not want to do anything. My daughter convinced me to come to dance night. I cried the first few times. But gradually, dancing brought me back. Music, movement, people, they reminded me I was still alive, still part of something." (Female senior dancer, 64)

"When I am dancing, I cannot think about problems. Music, steps, and partner require full attention. That break from worrying is healing. Moreover, by the time the dance ends, whatever was troubling me seems more manageable." (Male dancer, 42)

4.2 Identity Affirmation

For some participants, dance affirms personal, cultural, and regional identities and fosters community bonds.

"When I dance, I feel most myself. Not just individual self but cultural self, part of me connected to family, history, being Filipino. Dance connects me to that identity in ways words cannot." (Female dancer, 34)

"In some spaces, I have to explain myself, justify existence. On the dance floor, none of those matters. I am just a dancer, like everyone else. And good one, at that. That feeling, being valued for who I am and what I can do, is precious." (Non-binary dancer, 31)

4.3 Social Connection and Community Building

Dance events served as crucial sites of social connection, particularly for participants whose social networks might otherwise be limited, such as older adults, newcomers to communities, and individuals without extensive family nearby.

"I moved here for work, did not know anyone. Dance night became my community. Now I have friends, people who notice if I miss a week, who check on me. Dance gave me social life." (Male dancer, 27)

"We have people from different barangays, different walks of life, dancing together every week. They might not interact otherwise. But on the dance floor, they are partners. That builds connections that strengthen the whole community." (Female community organizer, 54)

4.4 Intergenerational Transmission

Dance functions as a vehicle for passing cultural knowledge and social skills, embedding tradition through lived practice rather than formal instruction.

"When young people learn to dance from elders, they learn more than movement. They learn patience because teaching takes patience. They learn respect because you respect the teacher, partner. They learn about relationships because dance is a conversation between partners. All that gets passed along with steps." (Male senior dancer, 66)

DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine how Western-originated social dances are localized, sustained, and experienced as everyday practice in the Southern Philippines. The findings show that social dancing is not a peripheral leisure activity but a socially embedded form of physical culture shaped through cultural adaptation, inclusive participation, institutional support, and psychosocial meaning. Rather than treating these as separate outcomes, this discussion synthesizes them into four interrelated contributions that directly address the research focus.

Localization as Lived Cultural Practice

Consistent with the focus of the study on how global dance forms are adapted in local contexts, the findings demonstrate that social dancing in the Southern Philippines operates through ongoing processes of cultural translation. Participants do not simply reproduce ballroom dance. They reshape it through musical localization, altered movement sensibilities, and aesthetic integration, making it meaningful within their own life worlds. This process is considered reinterpretation, where form is retained but meaning is reconstituted.

This reinforces theoretical perspectives that understand globalization as a site of negotiation rather than cultural erasure (Berry, 2019; Hughes-Freeland, 2014). What emerges is a hybridized practice that remains structurally legible as ballroom dance while being experientially grounded in Filipino cultural contexts. In this sense, localization is the very mechanism through which the practice becomes sustainable in everyday life.

The prominence of Filipino music within social dance spaces is particularly revealing. Musical substitution does more than alter accompaniment as it anchors movement in familiar linguistic, emotional, and mnemonic landscapes. Dance is linked to shared memory and emotions, allowing participants to find personal and collective meaning in their experiences. This transformation explains how cultural ownership is formed through practice.

Moreover, movement adaptations further reveal how localization operates subtly but powerfully. Participants described changes in posture, rhythm, and expressiveness that depart from the formal precision associated with competitive ballroom dance. These shifts reflect not a loss of technical rigor but a reorientation toward relationality, enjoyment, and social interaction. Dance, in this context, prioritizes connection over correctness, aligning with broader Filipino cultural values that emphasize interpersonal harmony and adaptability.

Regional scholarship provides useful points of comparison. Ting et al. (2024) show how hybrid dance forms in Chinese-Thai contexts generate “novel works” that balance continuity and innovation, while Damrhung and Skar (2024) highlight hybridity as a defining feature of Thai dance cultures negotiating modernity. The present study extends these insights by demonstrating that such processes are not confined to staged or institutional performance but are deeply embedded in everyday community practice, where adaptation is continuous and collectively enacted. These dynamics suggest that localization is a sustaining force. Social dance persists because it is continually reworked to align with participant lived realities. This finding contributes to broader debates on cultural sustainability by showing that endurance is achieved not through preservation of fixed forms but through ongoing transformation grounded in local meaning-making practices.

Inclusive Participation and Sustainable Physical Activity

Addressing the research aim of how participation is structured across communities, the findings reveal social dance as a form of physical activity characterized by accessibility and inclusivity. Participation cuts across generational, economic, and gender boundaries, supported by low-cost entry, flexible roles, and community-based organization. The intergenerational character of participation is particularly significant. Unlike many physical activities that segment participants by age or ability, social dance creates shared spaces for interaction and mutual learning. This supports research showing that synchronized group movement raises social interconnection and collective identity (Reddish, Fischer, & Bulbulia, 2013), while also contributing to physical development and coordination (Ma, 2025).

From a public health perspective, the accessibility of dance addresses structural barriers commonly associated with physical inactivity (Zlatar et al., 2025). Community dance events held in barangay spaces and requiring minimal resources offer a sustainable model for engagement, particularly for populations underserved by formal fitness programs.

Empirical research on dance further supports its multidimensional value. Ballroom dance, as described by Merom et al. (2016) and Merom et al. (2013), integrates physical, cognitive, and social dimensions, enhancing spatial memory while sustaining engagement through its interactive and affective qualities. These characteristics closely align with participant accounts, in which physical activity is inseparable from enjoyment, learning, and connection.

Institutional Embedding and Practice Sustainability

Beyond individual participation, the findings show the critical role of institutional and organizational support in sustaining social dance as an ongoing community practice. While dance is experienced at the level of embodied interaction, its continuity depends on broader structures that enable access, legitimacy, and transmission across contexts. This shifts the analysis from individual engagement to the conditions that enable such engagement, particularly in settings where access to organized physical activity is often uneven (Zlatar et al., 2025).

The integration of social dance into educational settings represents a key dimension of this institutional embedding. Schools function as entry points into dance culture, introducing younger generations to both movement and its associated social meanings. This shows understandings of community-based physical activity, where structured environments play a

critical role in shaping long-term participation patterns and sustaining engagement beyond initial exposure (Merom et al., 2016; Merom et al., 2013). Local government support further reinforces the visibility and viability of social dance. The provision of venues, logistical resources, and inclusion in cultural programming signals that dance is recognized as a legitimate component of community life. Such recognition aligns with research indicating that community-based initiatives are most effective when culturally relevant and grounded in participant lived experiences (Schulenkorf et al., 2026).

At the same time, the study underscores the importance of informal networks in sustaining practice. Connections among dancers, organizers, and instructors across barangays and cities create a flexible infrastructure that complements formal institutions. These networks enable knowledge exchange, event coordination, and community cohesion, often operating independently of official structures. Their presence highlights that sustainability emerges not from a single source but from the interaction between formal support and grassroots initiative.

However, this multi-layered support system also reveals points of vulnerability. Participants noted that institutional backing, particularly from local government, can be inconsistent and dependent on individual leadership or shifting priorities. This fragility reflects a broader challenge in community-based programs, where sustainability depends on consistent support and alignment with participant needs and contexts (Schulenkorf et al., 2026; Zlatar et al., 2025). In relation to the study objectives, these findings emphasize that the endurance of social dance is also structurally reinforced. Institutional embedding provides the conditions through which localized practices can persist, adapt, and expand over time. This insight contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of cultural sustainability, where everyday practice and institutional support are mutually constitutive rather than separate domains.

Psychosocial Meaning and Cultural Continuity

The study addresses how participants interpret the functions and meanings of social dance. The findings show that dance operates as a site of emotional well-being, identity affirmation, and community formation. Participants describe experiences of healing, belonging, and recognition, indicating that dance fulfills needs often unmet by purely recreational or fitness-oriented activities. These findings align with broader literature on the holistic benefits of dance. Cleary et al. (2025) identify physical, mental, social, and cognitive gains, while Louise and Jacobs (2021) emphasize dance roles in fostering cultural well-being and social inclusion. In this study, such benefits are not externally imposed but emerge from within the practice itself, rooted in participant lived experiences.

Importantly, these psychosocial functions also underpin cultural continuity. Through intergenerational participation and informal teaching, dance becomes a medium for transmitting values, relationships, and embodied knowledge. This supports the study broader argument that social dance persists not simply because it is enjoyable, but because it is meaningful within the social fabric of community life.

Implications and Contributions

These findings offer a more grounded understanding of social dance as a practice shaped, sustained, and made meaningful within local communities. First, the study shows how cultural adaptation happens in everyday life. It extends existing ideas of hybridity by representing how people actively reshape dance through their own experiences. At the same time, social dance emerges as an inclusive and sustainable form of physical activity, especially in places where access to formal exercise programs is limited. In addition, the findings reveal how participation is supported and sustained by networks of institutions and community actors. Lastly, the study brings attention to the psychosocial dimensions of dance, showing that well-being, identity, and social connection are not mere side benefits but central reasons why people continue to dance.

Seen from this perspective, the implications for physical education become clearer. Rather than approaching movement as purely technical or performance-driven, there is value in teaching practices that connect physical activity with cultural meaning. In this study, dance becomes a way of learning how to relate to others, understand culture, and engage with the community. In this context, the training-of-trainers model stands out as a practical approach, especially in settings with limited resources, because it allows knowledge and skills to circulate more widely.

Looking more broadly at theory, the study reinforces the idea that cultural practices endure because they are repeatedly enacted in everyday life. More specifically, it adds nuance to discussions of cultural adaptation by pointing to concrete processes, such as the use of local music, shifts in movement style, and aesthetic reinterpretation, through which practices become locally meaningful. In this way, the findings support viewing dance as a complex, embodied activity that brings together physical, cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions (Merom et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

This study examined social dancing in the Southern Philippines as a socially embedded form of physical culture. The findings specify that these dances are meaningful and sustained through cultural adaptation, inclusive participation, institutional support, and psychosocial significance. Specifically, Western-originated dances are continuously reshaped through local music, movement style, and aesthetic choices, so that they display Filipino cultural and emotional sensibilities. In this way, sustainability arises from a locally grounded reinterpretation rather than from the preservation of fixed forms.

Moreover, participation is inclusive across age, gender, ability, and socioeconomic status, fostering intergenerational learning, social connection, and community cohesion. At the same time, schools, local governments, and informal networks reinforce practice by providing resources, legitimacy, and knowledge-sharing, although support can be uneven and contingent on leadership or shifting priorities. Equally important, dance nurtures well-being, identity affirmation, and intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge, showing that its endurance depends as much on meaning and relationships as on physical activity.

These findings carry several implications. For educators and community practitioners, they suggest that culturally grounded, inclusive movement programs can enhance physical,

social, and emotional well-being while strengthening community ties. Also, for policy and local governance, the results express the value of supporting informal and formal dance initiatives as part of broader strategies for sustainable community engagement.

As a whole, these findings provide contextually grounded evidence of how social dance operates as a lived, meaningful practice. They emphasize the importance of considering local adaptation, social inclusion, and institutional structures when examining physical culture, without implying that these patterns are universally applicable beyond this community setting.

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AUTHORS' NOTE

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