



Pedagogical Competency of Dance Instructors in The Training of Malay Court Dance Skills Among Upper Secondary Students at Johor National Art School

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Submitted: 2021-08-20. Revised: 2021-10-06. Accepted: 2021-12-26

Abstract

Dance pedagogy is a complex and dynamic field of competency that involves various skills and self-appearance. Therefore, dance instructors must widen the scope of their competency to strengthen and improve their level. This research aimed to identify the competency of dance instructors teaching the practical subject of Malay Court Dance based on factors including the components of pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, and professionalism. The data was collected from interviews with the instructors and was analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings indicated that the instructors' competency level development could be mapped into three dimensions, namely orientation, agent, and competency content. It was concluded that art schools in Malaysia need to develop dance instructors' competency in terms of (1) 21st-century learning needs, (2) vertical and horizontal knowledge sharing, (3) workshop, study tour, and competition, and (4) standardization of technological development relevant for curriculum, across knowledge, practical, and feeling domains.

Keywords: dance pedagogy, competency development, instructor, court dance, Malay dance

How to Cite: Saearani, M. F. T., Chan, A. H., & Abdullah, N. N. M. L. (2021). Pedagogical Competency of Dance Instructors in The Training of Malay Court Dance Skills Among Upper Secondary Students at Johor National Art School. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research And Education*, 21(2), 221-232

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of National Art Schools under the Ninth Malaysia Plan has opened new perspectives in sustaining Malaysia's cultural arts and heritage. The art schools, situated in Sarawak and Johor, have been in operation since 2007, offering dance, music, visual arts, and cinematography programs. However, the problem is that most art schools hire instructors who are not pure educators to manage the teaching and learning processes. This study focused on one course, namely the Malay

Court Dance, explicitly targeting the Upper Secondary students at Johor National Art School (Sekolah Seni Malaysia Johor).

The main problem encountered by dance instructors teaching the practical subject of Malay Court Dance for Upper Secondary students at the Johor National Art School was identified. The problem identified was the competency in the teaching and learning sessions held in classes and studios. Factors that affected the level of competency for dance instructors were knowledge and specific education on Malay Court Dance and whether the

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instructors have adequate experience in teaching this subject. Apart from that, several instructors still lack detailed knowledge of the Malay Court Dance's contents and syllabus, which requires skills such as movement demonstration and techniques of Malay Court Dance during studio teaching.

Unfortunately, previous studies on dance and physical education keep adding new skills, despite the instructors already burdened by classical skills (Eddy et al., 2021; Gaunt & Treacy, 2020; Inan, 2021) or called for technological and other non-competency-based solution to the problem (Petrie, 2020; You, 2020) teachers, and students. Participants illuminate issues requiring action, including (1. Little focus was emphasized on what competency instructors already have and how they develop them to fulfill the needs of the curriculum. The novelty of this research lies in extending the literature to the competency development of dance instructors, especially in court dance specialties.

Therefore, this article will discuss the issues and address whether the competency level of dance instructors includes the use of methods and dance teaching techniques that are suitable in the teaching of Malay Court Dance. Next, how the application of movement terminology and techniques is conducted will also be discussed. There is also an issue of the student's level of understanding in the subject learned, which causes students lacking their focus during lessons. The dance instructors' level of competency during the teaching and learning session of the Malay Court Dance needs to be developed to address this issue.

Therefore, a study was conducted to identify the competency of the dance instructors who are teaching the practical subject of Malay Court Dance, based on factors including the components of pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, and professionalism. Through this study, the dance instructors were helped to improve and become more competent in the teaching and learning sessions, whether in class-

rooms or studios.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1986b, 1986a) and personal knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987) are closely connected to the ability of the syllabus contents of a particular course (Ball et al., 2008). As a result, the knowledge of the course contents will be the factor to develop the pedagogical skills of instructors (Mabingo, 2019).

Many instructors have received and understood the general teaching of dance skills in dance pedagogy, but they do not have a vast knowledge of the teaching and learning strategies (Fortin, 1993). Meanwhile, the content of the dance learning is a complex topic as it covers various elements including the domains of dance ontology and epistemology (Fortin, 1993). Dance instructors must not only master the body and movement skills, but also the knowledge of the movement, creative dance, history, meaning, copying the dance, theory, choreography, and achievement (Mabingo, 2019). Therefore, dance instructors must understand the practical knowledge, namely the specific rule that relates historically to one particular culture in a dance, choreography, and the expression (Lehikoinen, 2019). Personally, dance instructors must have high level of creativity, sportiveness, good stamina, high interpersonal skills, be hardworking and dedicated, be cheerful, and work well as a team (Tavishi, 2016). Apart from that, instructors must also understand the aspects of ethics, culture, and health dance pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Leaf & Ngo, 2017; KG Lehikoinen, 2019).

Moreover, dance instructors must also have learning and choreography efficiency. The learning efficiency comprises the aspects of pedagogy, subject content, assessment and evaluation, speech and communication, and good class management. In contrast, choreography efficiency covers the elements of dance techniques, leadership, creativity, and discipline (Ri-

palda, 2019).

The competency aspects, as discussed above, are indeed beneficial to be applied in teaching effectively, especially during lessons. Dance teachers or instructors will face many problems that must be handled well. Examples of these problems include students' attitude, religious issues, the physical ability of students, noisy environment, students' knowledge in doing the required movements, availability of space, giving equal attention to individual students, differences in students' achievement levels, and the class size (Ripalda, 2019).

Even though it might be perceived as static, the dance world is dynamic and full of new, developing ideas and trends (Lehikoinen, 2003). With this, instructors who have mastered the different aspects of dance efficiency, as explained before, must also learn from their experiences and improve their efficiency to keep developing and expanding their knowledge, skills, and dance understanding (Lehikoinen, 2019).

Indeed, the dance knowledge is complex due to the presence of 'silent' or subjective expertise, referring to the practical knowledge that words could not portray but could be shown or demonstrated (Lehikoinen, 2019). This 'silent knowledge' is developed through experiences from time to time (Polanyi, 1966).

The existence of this silent knowledge of dance implies the development of various competencies. Utilizing formal training is not enough to help in developing dance instructors' competency (Haerani et al., 2020). Free and collective actions are also not that adequate yet (You, 2020). The result of competency in an accessible and coordinated way leads to the possibility of repeated training, especially in terms of practical aspects in the knowledge domain that is being critically observed by dance instructors (Bruner, 1999).

Currently, studies on the development of competency for dance instructors in Malaysia are still minimal. At this point, studies have mainly focused on competen-

cy in the context of higher education (Gonzales, 2015). Studies that aim to explore the competency and strategy of development for dance instructors of the National Art School in Malaysia in bridging the gap between current studies are still difficult to obtain. Therefore, this study focuses on Court dance as a dance genre with a socio-cultural context and a more conservative historical background than other dance arts developed in this country.

METHOD

The qualitative research methodology was employed in this study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) to explore dance instructors' efficiency and competency development. The qualitative research design enabled the researcher to convey the process, reflection, and experience (Barbour, 2014) encountered by the dance instructors while teaching at Johor National Art School (SSeMJ).

This study was conducted at Johor National Art School (SSeMJ), Malaysia. This school is located at Jalan Persiaran Ilmu, 81750 Bandar Seri Alam, Masai, Pasir Gudang, Johor. The time of this study was in September 2020.

The subjects for this research were the Malay Court Dance course's dance instructors at Johor National Art School (SSeMJ). Three dance instructors with differing levels of teaching experience, namely junior, secondary, and senior were involved. The senior instructor, who is also the head of the dance department, is male aged 38 years old and has 16 years of experience in teaching. The secondary instructor is a male teacher with 8 years of teaching experience aged 40 years old. Meanwhile, the junior instructor is a teacher with a year of teaching experience aged between 20–30 years old. The sampling of subjects was acquired utilizing the snowball sampling technique (Noy, 2008). To elaborate, firstly the senior instructor was identified and asked directly for his permission to participate as a subject. Next, with the help of the senior instructor, the secondary instructor and

the junior instructor were identified.

The data collected consisted of primary and secondary data. The preliminary data was sourced from the dance instructors, while the secondary data involved academic documents and teaching materials for the Malay Court Dance at Johor National Art School (SSeMJ). To find the secondary data concerning the framework and teaching materials for Malay Court Dance, the sources before were requested before formal interviews were conducted. Interview transcripts were then compared with the data from the documents and teaching materials for data triangulation.

The case study at Johor National Art School (SSeMJ) was conducted using the qualitative methodology for semi-structured interview sessions. The interviews (n=3) were conducted with the senior, secondary and junior instructors teaching at SSeMJ. The objectives of the interviews were to explore the efficiency and the conduct of the dance teaching and learning, as well as supporting factors and limitations encountered. The researcher also inquired the informants on their strategies to overcome the limitations and develop their competency. A half-structured approach had enabled investigating various aspects that emerged during the interviews.

This study applied the case study based on the data collected and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) relating to the instructors' information and experiences during Court dance at SSeMJ. The thematic analysis was conducted in six stages: data familiarization, early coding development, defining, observing, and deciding on the categorization, and reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis helped to produce the themes that best reflected on the instructors' experiences.

In this qualitative research, to ensure that the data collected was valid and reliable, several indicators of validity were applied: trustworthiness, validation, transferability, and credibility (Sousa, 2014). Validation is the objective aspect of data obtained while transferability would relate to

the validity of the research. Validation and transferability could be achieved simultaneously through triangulation. The triangulation technique helps to strengthen the trustworthiness of the data and source as it increases the possibility that a replicated study would be getting similar results if different methods were to be used. Besides, triangulation could also increase the effect of transferability in the validity of the research (Sousa, 2014). The thematic content analysis of the interviews was standardized with the policy documents' contents, and the teaching materials for the Malay Court Dance taught at SSeMJ.

The credibility of research questions could be achieved by involving freelance experts of qualitative researchers who are not aware of the subject investigated and would not be affected by the research subject (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hallberg, 2010). The experts in consultation had reduced the interview questions from eight to only four essential questions, focusing more on answering the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Senior Instructor

The senior instructor was observed to have changed; from an apprentice to an expert in dance teaching. In 2007 to 2010, it was stated that instructors should teach all types of dances from Level 1 to Level 5. At any point in time, any instructor could be transferred from one level of teaching to another. After 2010, instructors were able to specifically focus on their expertise in education due to the increase of instructors hired. However, only several senior instructors mastered all types of dances, who later went through a rolling process to bridge the gaps and needs in teaching specific dances.

As the year approached in 2016, textbooks were available for all national art schools in Malaysia. These textbooks had resulted in the dance curriculum to be specified into two categories: the *Asyik* dance and the *Terinai* dance. Before the

textbooks' were introduced, the number and types of Court dances taught were different, especially for Johor National Art School (SSeMJ). The *Joget Gamelan* was also introduced during that time. Therefore, in a way, the availability of the textbooks that defined the curriculum helped make learning court dance easier by focusing on only two types of dances.

In the interview, it was also mentioned that the competency development was conducted in two levels: management level and execution level. At the management level in SSeMJ, workshops were organized via collaborations with other schools. Meanwhile, at the execution level, there were two strategies of competency development. Firstly, knowledge-sharing sessions were carried out in the society of instructors' meetings. Secondly, instructors were encouraged to ask and refer to other internal and external experts.

Johor National Art School (SSeMJ) adheres to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) in terms of the teaching module as there is already a standard learning module (STP) that must be implemented as the reference and guideline to the learning and assessments. For example, the external module from the Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) could only be used as a secondary source. However, several conflicts exist on how the teaching and learning should be conducted based on the STP, as shown in the textbooks. Teachers should still refer to the STP, widen their perspectives on new teaching and learning techniques, and not critically question the STP differences and practices. The 21st Century Learning (PAK-21), oriented on communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, is also absorbed into the dance teaching and learning. The effectiveness and overall execution are still in the improvement processes.

The interviews also observed no mutual understanding and agreement between the national art schools and the university curriculum. Several informants felt no similarities between what was taught in the national art school and the university.

Consequently, there should be a continuity in terms of the curriculum standard for the dance subject. Apart from that, there was no standardized module in the Malay dance that could be applied in the teaching and learning process; thus, it all depends on practitioners or instructors to plan and conduct lessons. The textbook had only shown the overall outline of the teaching but not the content details of the dance learning.

The Intermediate Level Instructor

The results from the interviews with the intermediate level instructor (who has eight years of teaching experiences) conveyed the observation of learning the dance based on the students' thinking maturity and skills. In this matter, the role of instructors was to strengthen each student based on their different levels of skills. The interviewee identified three groups of efficiency: students with perfect practical ability and skills, students with high theoretical skills but low practical skills, and students who have poor practical and academic skills. The knowledge-sharing processes were either passive or active. In terms of active sharing, the instructor asked several questions to the students and shared the solutions and the issues faced in the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, in the passive sharing, the instructor observed several factors shown by the senior instructors, and therefore able to follow similarly on the senior instructors' way of teaching. The teachers learn the tradition of SseMJ while still maintaining the openness of perspectives.

On the external level, the instructor agreed on the benefits of workshops and study tours. These provided knowledge-sharing opportunities and provided advice and tips on competition planning and performances. These workshops and study tours had also enabled a unique program for the dance field to be carried out, which could further support the learning and increase the motivation for students who might become discouraged at specific points.

The instructors pointed out the importance of standardization. The standardization will reduce the differences in teaching among the current dance teachers at the art school.

One of the weaknesses of the 21st-century learning implementation observed by the instructor was the technological aspect, which was still very limited in supporting dance learning. This limitation had caused difficulty for the teachers in achieving the learning objectives oriented in communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, which are conventional aspects that need external help in terms of technology.

The Junior Instructor

It was noted that the junior instructor depended a lot on the senior instructor by asking questions about the best teaching guidelines to be applied to the students at schools where they teach. The junior instructor has minimum teaching experience in the educational aspect, and the Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) had given more focus on the industrial training. Even though UPSI is an education-based university, it is noted that the dance education course has not been offered during the time this article is written. In other words, it could be stated that the junior instructor had not yet received enough exposure to teach the students in terms of the dance pedagogical aspect.

Relating to the course content, the junior instructor had also learned from students in UPSI. During the students' class performances, the junior instructor made observations and requested that the students show their dance techniques. The demonstration helped the junior instructor recall what she had learned in UPSI and could further be implemented as the material to be taught to her students at SSeMJ.

The textbook was regarded as an excellent reference to the teaching and learning of dance and its contents. However, the junior instructor encountered difficulty in the teaching guideline given by the textbook. The instructor found it easier to

learn from the VCD that accompanied the textbook.

The junior instructor had tried to apply what she had learned from the three sources explained above. She also found the interaction between her resources and the context experienced in the classes as a practical teaching guideline. The instructor supported the standardization of the dance module as it provided more straightforward guidelines and pathway of syllabus contents for the instructor to apply in her teaching.

The primary data had revealed three critical issues, as observed from the interviews, which have the implications for the competency development of court dance instructors at Johor National Art School. These three crucial issues are orientation, agency, and the content of the competency itself.

Orientation

The orientation dimension refers to which direction the competency development is geared. This dimension consists of external and internal orientations. The external orientation is how the competency development involves outside agencies, such as the private actors, non-government organizations, and education institutions. Meanwhile, internal orientation refers to the activities carried out in the organization of the art school itself without involving the outside sectors.

Agency

The agency dimension refers to those targeted in the development: students and instructors. The instructor's incompetency will impact the students' development as they transmit what they have learned in the development program to the classroom learning. Students' growth will also depend on the instructors as the developmental agents to the students. In this matter, the findings indicated that dance instructors' efficiency could provide more understanding to the students in learning the Malay Court dance skills at Johor National Art School. It could have been less

impact at the beginning but will gradually be better as the instructors' duration and experience of teaching increase. However, as an early career educator, the junior instructor who comes from a non-education background has more to learn in terms of pedagogy.

Competency

The competency dimension refers to the aspect of dance competency that needs to be developed. The competency dimension relates to the Bloom Taxonomy that consists of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor elements. In dance education, mental efficiency is implemented in the knowledge of the history and theory of dance. Inspiration is essential for the Malay Court dance as it is a unique factor that differentiates between the Malay court dance and the community or folk dance. The psychomotor dimension relates to the practical part, the students' and instructors' demonstration and direct movement.

In the students' context, the competency dimension will be developed through the instructors' efficiency in planning and conducting the interaction to learn the dance skills at SSeMJ arena. Based on the findings, it is confirmed that the efficiency factor must still be developed for the junior instructor due to the non-education background of the instructor, that conflicts with the need of planning and conducting of dance learning that is the requirement of efficiency in the field of education.

The textbook is also handy for the dance instructors as a guideline to conduct the learning assessment of the court skills at SSeMJ. The quality depends on how the assessment experiences could be transferred from the senior instructors' knowledge and the problem-solving fieldwork processes.

The Framework for Competency Development

The three dimensions form the (2 x 2 x 3) three-dimensional block that functions as the basic block of framework help in developing the competency of court

dance instructors. The combination of dimensions that should be the focus is the orientation and agency dimensions, as the competency dimension is a continuity that can be expanded quickly based on variations. This expansion is formed by the orientation and agency dimensions. Figure 1 explains the framework:

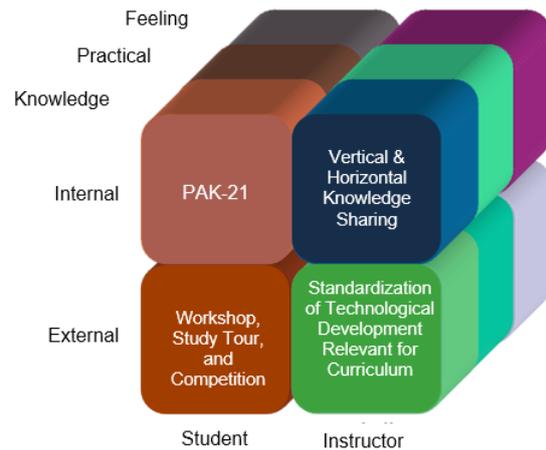


Figure 1. Framework for Competency Development of the Malay Court Dance Instructors (Source: Muhammad Fazli Taib, 2021).

From Figure 1, it could be observed that the internal competency development of students implements the concept from the Ministry of Education (KPM), which is the 21st Century Learning (PAK-21). This standard becomes clear for the students, instructors, and the school. However, the findings showed that problems still arise in identifying an effective way to integrate technology into dance teaching, making it suitable to the aspirations and objectives of PAK-21. The development of the internet technology in supporting dance learning must be used well. The internet has various mediums of support for dance learning through YouTube for video learning and involving the students and professionals of dance for knowledge and experience sharing (Lee et al., 2019; Z. Li et al., 2018; You, 2020). Nevertheless, this also requires the increase of instructors' competency in aspects of digital and communication efficiency (You, 2020). Hence, the PAK-21 leads to the knowledge, practice, and inspi-

ration parts of the competency dimension.

Next, PAK-21 also supports the instructors' efforts in developing the students' potential in learning the court dance skills at SSeMJ. The instructors are working hard to train the students individually by observing and understanding their backgrounds, one by one, and providing appropriate, specific training steps to improve each student's potential. This strategy is experienced globally in the dance education. The dance classes must be regarded as individuals with different backgrounds, but shared similarities between these individuals are still maintained (Seebuma & Martin, 2018).

However, these efforts still faced challenges, and the instructors find it challenging to keep track of potential development, especially creativity and technological usage. Dilemma and conflict arise between letting the students be creative with their style and creations and following the dance standards guidelines. Therefore, it is essential to relate to the dimension of external competency of the instructors too, where this includes the standardization aspect and technological-based learning.

The efficiency development of the instructors in terms of internal aspects relates to the knowledge-sharing process. The process of knowledge sharing could be carried out vertically or horizontally. Vertically, the knowledge-sharing process occurs between senior and junior instructors. From top to bottom of knowledge transfer, the senior instructors will help guide and teach the junior instructors. In contrast, the junior instructors ask for advice and supervision and give input or observe the teaching practices carried out by the senior instructors. Horizontally, the process that takes place is the knowledge transfer and sharing between teachers and partners. This process occurs in the instructors' groups at the same or different levels (Muhammed & Zaim, 2020). This development must happen in the three dimensions explained (knowledge, practical, and mental). The knowledge-sharing process will also help improve the instructors' strength and

confidence (RZ Li & Vexler, 2019).

Relating to the external dimensions for the instructors, the standardization, development of technology, and suitability of curriculum are essential aspects in the competency development. The importance of dance standards is highlighted in the literature review sources as a vital aspect for developing the efficiency of dance instructors. Standardization is essential to form a shared tradition, later adopted as a cultural identity (Georgios, 2018). Further, standardization is also crucial to ensure that the dance is accepted widely, representing the community, and providing the context where the instructors could be switched between different places to teach the similar dance art required. All involved parties would still understand what is being taught.

However, situations in which standardization could be compromised are considered when emphasizing creativity, improvisation, and continuous transformation, where these aspects undeniably contrast with the standardization factor (Georgios, 2018). Nevertheless, standardization and non-standardization must be equal (Dowell & Goering, 2018; Risner & Schupp, 2020). For example, the Ancient Greece dance portrays the dynamism that shows the tenseness between two elements: standardization (standard, collectivity, cohesion, and time duration) and the aspects of creativity and innovation (Georgios, 2018). A similar issue is observed in the dances of Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

Without standardization, the dance would be seen as chaotic, without a precise portrayal of its identity and tradition. Still, without creativity, the dance would be deemed uninteresting, passively repeating, and could be copied in a mimetic way, becoming stereotyped and unnatural (Georgios, 2018; Risner, 2019).

The support given by external bodies or societies to the instructors' development of competency is still lacking. The junior instructor stated that she encountered difficulty in learning and understanding the

textbook flow meant as a reference and guideline for the instructors. Since dance art learning depends on 'silent' or implicit knowledge, it is reasonable that lessons could be demonstrated well visually using kinesthetic means. The junior instructor had also stated that it was far easier for her to understand the dance course content and teaching guideline through a video compact disc (VCD) compiled with the textbook rather than reading the book. Video is indeed a visual artifact, and movements portrayed will be beneficial in learning and understanding dance (Risner, 2017). It must be emphasized that standardization is different from the curriculum interpreted in the textbook. Standardization is more connected to the competency in the content, while the curriculum is connected to learning. Standardization helps not only the instructors but also practitioners in the industry to develop dance art. At the same time, the specific curriculum could be applied by the instructors to transmit their competency to the students. Only the curriculum has been prepared, while the standardization could not be carried out yet. In implication, teachers who conduct lessons are still dependent on the knowledge they have obtained from previous studies and the organizational internal and external knowledge transfer.

The curriculum connection between the national art school and the university is another crucial element in the findings related to the instructors' external competency development aspect. The suitable curriculum shared by the national art school and the university will enable a smooth transfer process for students who would like to continue their education from secondary school until the tertiary level at the university. Thus, standardization between the school and the university system is hoped to break the barrier caused by the incompatible curriculum (Liao et al., 2018). It is encouraged that the school and the university collaborate in developing forums for learning, applying, and restructuring the curriculum together (Bautista et al., 2021). Apart from curriculum improvement, the

collaboration between the school and the university would also help in the transformation process of both sides, making the development of identity easier to achieve, as well as socialization, and learning process for instructors, students, and lecturers (Loughland & Nguyen, 2017; Rust, 2020). In addition, universities should identify new approaches based on theories and investigation and assess the effectiveness of learning while schools can be more up-to-date with dance education developments (Burroughs et al., 2020).

The suitability of this curriculum implies the way instructors could improve students' thinking maturity and skills and how the university prepares teachers to teach at national art schools. The common problem faced at the university is the difficulty in managing the transfer of level for the first-year students, from their school to the university, due to the significant gap encountered in the previous learning of dance techniques (Rimmer, 2017). Students have also faced pressure in taking whichever chance they could to bridge the skills gap between what they have learned in schools and what is currently taught at the university (Cranmore et al., 2019). These problems could be solved if there is a standardization between the curriculum in the university and the national art school curriculum. The instructors could help prepare the students since their freshman year to understand the lectures, and new students should not be too stressed when undergoing their first year of study in the university.

Lastly, the external development of students' efficiency comes from organizing workshops, study tours, and competitions. Organizing workshops could help deepen the collective understanding of the broad scope of potential for dance movements; an individual can portray that to express their artistry (Buono & Burnidge, 2020). Workshops and study or work tours enable students and instructors to gain different dance learning experiences, enriching their perspectives (Seebuuma & Martin, 2018). Hence, this will diminish traditional

hegemony or a particular school of dance education and give standardization (Heyang & Martin, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

The competency of the dance instructors teaching the practical subject of the Malay Court Dance found in this research is mapped into three dimensions: orientation, agent, and competency dimensions. The competency dimension itself consists of knowledge, practice, and feeling. These competencies are combined with other dimensions and create four competency groups: (1) PAK-21, (2) vertical and horizontal knowledge sharing, (3) workshop, study tour, and competition, and (4) standardization of technological development relevant for curriculum—each of these competency groups has its knowledge, practical, and feeling dimensions.

This research contributes to the literature review in terms of investigating the dance instructors' competency to give the understanding of the course to the students, plan, conduct the learning interaction and assessment, and develop the students' potential in learning the court dance skills at SSeMJ. The focus was on three different levels of teaching: the senior, intermediate, and junior at SSeMJ. The competency of instructors in three aspects was evaluated at the low, medium, and high levels. An essential element of the findings is how the instructors could bridge the competency gap they encounter through the strategy involving three dimensions: orientation, agent, and competency domain. It is best advised that the instructors are able to improve their efficiency in all the fields. These fields include implementing the PAK-21, sharing their knowledge vertically and horizontally, taking parts in workshops, work tours or visits, and competitions, and helping to develop curriculum standardization.

The findings revealed the need for collective action involving the national art school organization and other vital sectors to support the development of competen-

cy among the instructors and students in learning the court dance. Forming a standard that eliminates different variations in the learning content of the court dance is needed to develop the instructors' competency systematically and consistently. Several factors need to be reviewed in terms of the relevancy of the dance learning aspect in promoting a close connection between the curriculum of the secondary school, teachers, and education at the university. The strategies of elimination or addition of factors are needed in the form of internal and external knowledge sharing networking (vertical-horizontal) to develop dance instructors' competency in the national art schools of Malaysia. It is encouraged to take a step back to evaluate overall what needs to be improved and reviewed and insert suitable elements to develop. It is undeniable that humans are used to the bias additive element, which relates to the higher tendency to add more factors, not reduce them, in solving problems (Adams et al., 2021). Standardization and relevancy are efforts taken to mitigate prolonged factors that could hinder competency, as well as too much variety that could cause the meaning of identity and consistency to disappear. Further research is advised regarding this issue to obtain a more comprehensive idea in developing the instructors' competency through the external strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research is funded by Education-Based University Research Grant (GPUBP) (2019-0069-107-01) from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI).

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