

## **SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SOCIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT WITH FOLK DANCES: A CULTURAL APPROACH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the contribution of Turkish folk dances to the development of self-confidence and social skills of individuals. Folk dances are activities that strengthen social bonds and improve individuals' ability to express and adapt in groups. These dances play an important role in strengthening participants' self-confidence. Elements such as performing on stage and being appreciated by the community strengthen the individual's belief in themselves. At the same time, the demands of communication and cooperation during folk dances allow participants to develop their social skills. The educational value of folk dances is not limited to the social and emotional development of the individual, but is also of great importance for the preservation and transmission of cultural identity. By reflecting the values and social norms passed down through generations, these dances make an important contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage. Consequently, it can be said that folk dances have an important place in Turkish culture and make a significant contribution to the development of self-confidence and social skills of individuals. Therefore, the inclusion and dissemination of folk dances in educational programs is of great importance for the social and emotional development of individuals.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Folk Dances in Education, Self-confidence Development, Social Skills Turkish Folk Dances.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Folk dances are an important social phenomenon when it comes to maintaining community life in a healthy, continuous and integrated way (Tunçalp, 2011). Folk dances can provide individuals with important benefits in terms of “national and cultural development”, “development of bilateral relations”, “social development”, “development of group relations”, “emotional development”, “physical development” and “development of personal skills”

(Doğan & Yetim, 2011; Epçaçan & Kayhan, 2023). From this perspective, Turkish folk dances, as a historical and cultural heritage, have been an important part of the social structure of society for centuries. These dances are not only a means of entertainment and celebration, but also activities that strengthen people's social bonds and develop their social skills (Işıldar & Yıldız, 2019).

Self-confidence refers to a person's belief in their own abilities and worth and is crucial for personal and social success (Bandura, 1997). Folk dances are referred to as one of the most important tools that can help individuals express themselves and boost their self-confidence (Salici & Çimen, 2022). These games, which are especially performed in groups, improve participants' ability to act and adapt together (Kayhalak & Elyagutu, 2023). In addition, the sense of achievement in folk dances and the appreciation by the community contribute significantly to strengthening the self-confidence of the individual (Turan, 2023).

Social skills include an individual's ability to communicate effectively in social relationships, cooperate and show empathy (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). Turkish folk dances provide a rich environment in which individuals can develop their social skills. Players must constantly communicate with each other during the game, follow certain rules and adapt to the group dynamics (Soykan & Mirzeoğlu, 2020). This process allows individuals to develop their social skills naturally (Doğan & Yetim, 2011; Soykan & Mirzeoğlu, 2020).

The educational value of folk dances is not limited to social skills and self-confidence. At the same time, these dances are also of great importance for the preservation and transmission of cultural identity (Uslu, 2013). Turkish folk dances reflect values, traditions and social norms that have been passed down through generations. Therefore, the inclusion of folk dances in the educational process contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and supports the development of students' self-confidence and social skills (Metem, 2020).

The aim of this study is to examine the contribution of Turkish folk dances to the development of self-awareness and social skills of individuals from a cultural perspective. Turkish folk dances have a long history and are recognized as an important cultural heritage that strengthens social solidarity, sense of belonging and interaction between individuals. This study addresses the question of how folk dances enhance individual self-expression, group adaptation and social interaction skills. Furthermore, when folk dances are used as an effective tool in the educational process, their contribution to enhancing students' self-confidence and developing their social skills is evaluated. In this context, the impact of the cultural richness of folk dances

on individual and social development is discussed and their importance for the development of self-confidence and social skills is emphasized.

### **Gaining Self-Confidence and Social Skills Through Folk Dances**

Folk dances play an important role in the social and emotional development of the individual and are an important part of cultural heritage. Folk dances help participants to express themselves and boost their self-confidence. For example, a significant increase in self-confidence was observed in university students who participated in folk dances (Soykan & Mirzeoğlu, 2020). People who participate in folk dances get to know themselves better and express their emotions through their body language. Folk dances are also important for understanding group dynamics and promoting teamwork. Research shows that students who participate in folk dances significantly improve their social skills. In doing so, they acquire skills such as leadership, empathy and problem-solving (Gündoğdu, 2019).

Folk dances have also been found to strengthen social cohesion and solidarity by bringing together people from different age groups and social classes (Karacan-Doğan & Durmuş, 2023). Such activities help to build strong social bonds between individuals and strengthen social cohesion. Folk dances can be seen as an effective tool for developing individuals' self-confidence and social skills. It not only promotes personal development but can also strengthen social bonds. Therefore, the inclusion and dissemination of folk dances in educational programs is of great importance for the social and emotional development of individuals.

Folk dances have an important place in Turkish culture and can contribute to the development of social skills and self-confidence. Folk dances contribute to cultural unity and integrity in the social environment in which they are performed. These dances have an important function in passing on cultural values to future generations. They can strengthen social solidarity and express the feelings of the place to which they belong with aesthetic movements. It conveys the cultural characteristics of the society with its visual and auditory aspects (Güzeloğulları & Ertural, 2006). A study conducted with university students has shown that folk dances have a positive effect on their social skills and self-confidence (Soykan & Mirzeoğlu, 2020). Folk dances have an important place in our cultural memory. They are valuable in keeping our traditions alive and expressing our identity (Kültürel Bellek, 2020).

Folk dances give participants stage experience and boost their self-confidence. Performing on stage allows people to express themselves and interact with others. This experience can boost self-confidence and make it easier to express oneself in public. Folk dances are important for

keeping cultural heritage alive and passing it on to future generations. They keep traditions alive and help to express the identity of a community. Cultural values are passed on through dance figures, music and costumes. Through folk dancing, university students can improve their social interaction and boost their self-confidence. Dancing in a group can improve their ability to work together and provides an opportunity to communicate with new people (Akkaş & Güngör, 2022; Akın, 2018).

## **CONCLUSION**

Folk dances are a cultural activity that plays an important role in the development of self-awareness and social skills of individuals. In this study, the contribution of Turkish folk dances to the social and emotional development of individuals was examined. While folk dances give participants the opportunity to express themselves, they also help them to develop their group harmony and collective action skills. This process allows individuals to develop their social interaction skills in a natural way.

The self-confidence and social skills of people who take part in folk dances have improved significantly. Studies conducted with university students in particular show that these dances help students to get to know themselves better and boost their self-confidence. In addition, folk dances have been found to strengthen social cohesion and solidarity and help build strong social bonds by bringing people from different age groups and social classes together.

The educational value of folk dances is not limited to the social and emotional development of the individual but is also of great importance for the preservation and transmission of cultural identity. These dances reflect the values and social norms that have been passed down through generations. Therefore, their inclusion in the educational process contributes significantly to the survival of cultural heritage.

In conclusion, folk dances occupy an important place in Turkish culture and contribute significantly to the development of self-confidence and social skills of the individual. These dances also play an important role in passing on cultural values and traditions to future generations. The inclusion of folk dances in the educational process will promote the development of students' self-confidence and social skills and contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. Therefore, introducing and popularizing folk dances to a wider audience is important for social solidarity and individual development.

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