


SOMATIC EDUCATION AND THE UNDERGRADUATE DANCE STUDENT'S BODY IMAGE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A EDUCAÇÃO SOMÁTICA E A IMAGEM CORPORAL DO ESTUDANTE DE DANÇA DO ENSINO SUPERIOR: UM ESTUDO QUALITATIVO

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Abstract. Regarding dance practitioners, body image associated with dance movement is a dynamic and complex phenomenon involving internal processes that cause impact on the psychological, emotional and behavioural areas. Balance between internal and external body experience is crucial for the construction of body image, and is associated with the way the student acquires knowledge about his own movement. In many contexts of dance teaching-learning, we found a focus centred almost exclusively on the reproduction of movement from the external visual image, in which body shapes and movement, should match an idealized model. Somatic education, on the other hand, is a disciplinary field that privileges the somatosensory experience of the body as a source of knowledge. Starting out from an experiential approach based on movement perception, we intended to study the body image of the dance student. For this purpose, we developed and applied a Somatic Movement (SM) program to a group of undergraduate dance students. We used a qualitative methodological design with multiple data collection approach methods, which included in-depth semi-structured interviews, explication interviews (Vermersch, 2003), participant journals and group discussions. Our primary purpose is not only to present, develop and substantiate the adopted methodological procedures but also to articulate them with the sub-questions of the study, which according to our point of view will contribute to a more categorical knowledge of how to investigate highly subjective concepts such as body experiences.

Keywords: dance; somatic education; body image; qualitative research; multi-methods approach.

Resumo. Nos praticantes de dança, a imagem corporal associada ao movimento dançado é um fenómeno dinâmico e complexo que envolve processos internos com impacto no domínio psicológico, emocional e comportamental. O equilíbrio entre a experiência interna e externa do corpo é determinante para a construção da imagem corporal e está associado à forma como o estudante adquire conhecimento acerca do seu movimento. Verificamos em muitos contextos do ensino-aprendizagem da dança, um foco centrado quase exclusivamente na reprodução do movimento a partir da imagem visual externa, na qual se procura, que as formas corporais e o movimento correspondam a um modelo idealizado. Já a educação somática, é um campo disciplinar que privilegia a experiência somatossensorial do corpo enquanto fonte de conhecimento. A partir de uma abordagem experiencial baseada na percepção do movimento, propusemo-nos estudar a imagem corporal do estudante de dança. Para tal desenvolvemos e aplicámos um programa de Movimento Somático (MS) a um grupo de estudantes do ensino superior de dança, recorrendo a um design metodológico qualitativo com uma abordagem com múltiplos métodos de recolha de dados que incluem entrevistas em profundidade, semiestruturadas e segundo o método de explicitação (Vermersch, 2003), diários de bordo dos participantes e discussões de grupo. Tendo como objetivo primordial apresentar, desenvolver e fundamentar os procedimentos metodológicos adotados, também propomos uma articulação dos mesmos com as subquestões do estudo, contribuindo, em nosso entender, para um conhecimento mais categórico de como se pode investigar conceitos altamente subjetivos como são as vivências corporais.

Palavras chave: dança; educação somática; imagem corporal; investigação qualitativa; abordagem com múltiplos métodos.

INTRODUCTION

Body image is a complex construct that embraces multiple concepts, and assumes several meanings, scopes and definitions in literature, even within the same study area.

In the published writings, we can find great abundance of studies in which body image is conceived as a linear scale, allowing to explain the relationship between the evaluations that the individual makes of his own appearance according to environmental features, biological factors and body changes. These are quantitative approaches and consider body image as an internal representation of the external appearance of the body.

Several authors (Gallagher, 1995; O'Shaughnessy, 1995; Pylvänäinen, 2003; Tiermesma, 1989) highlight body experience and the aspects that are related to movement perception as inherent factors of body image. According to Joly (2006), "l'image du corps, c'est aussi ce que l'on ressent de soi-même dans l'expérience intime du corps aux plans sensorimoteur, kinesthésique et proprioceptif" (p. 21).

The approach to the body image concept that we propose in this study is based on the ideas of Schilder (1999) that stresses the crucial role of the moving body to the interactions between the self, the others and the environment. To this author, the construction of body image is anchored in proprioception and kinaesthesia which granted unity to body experience, allowing the subject to confirm its presence in the body”

The dynamic construction of body image was characterized by Schilder as a “continual flow of activity followed by the crystallization of points of rest” (Hanley, 2004, p. 85), that are subsequently followed by moments of change. Body image’s plasticity results in the ability to change and constantly multiply our images including the body’s postural model. Schilder (2019, p. 207) states that by allowing to defy gravity and postural habits, “The phenomenon of dance is therefore a loosening and changing in the body image”.

The moving body is both the subject and object of our perception, through processes that may have different levels of conscience. In our study, we assume Pylvänäinen’s (2003) theoretical model, which highlights the direct relation and mutual influence between movement and body image. This tripartite model¹, embraces the subjective experience of the moving body represented by the body self. This concept includes what it is experienced in kinaesthetic, emotional and cognitive terms. The body-self relates to the environment through movement, permitting to look upon body image as something more than a representation. The body memories concept includes the background of body experiences and motor responses. Interaction between body self and body memories, is continuous: moments that have been lived are stored in the body memories that work as a reference to evaluate the present moment and the recognition of familiar patterns. Finally, the image properties concept concerns the external representation of the body. It relates to the perception of physical appearance, it is constructed through visual and proprioceptive sensations and is influenced by social interaction and cultural involvement. Pylvänäinen (2003, p. 53) refers that these three concepts “developed through movement and influence the type of movement that is created. They are socially constructed, and build the sense of self.”

The model briefly presented here is suitable to the study of the dance student's body image since it covers several dimensions of body image, its relationship with movement, as it also explains the dynamics within the relationships between the three concepts. The dance student's body memories are constructed and transformed according to the subjective bodily experience in its relation to the environment, the body-self, while at the same time they serve as a reference for the perception of that experience. On the other hand, the image properties, are directly related to the external representation of his movement and to the meaning that he attributes to his experience, that is, the evaluation and appreciation of his body in movement.

In the dance education context, the dynamic construction of body image has particular interest since the attention given to movement includes the internal experiences that are associated to the image of the living body, but also its external expression, the image of the objectified body (Green, 1999; Joly, 2006; Parviainen, 1998). The dance student is often confronted with his image represented in the classroom mirrors and on video. The attention he draws to his body and his movement whilst a visible object to others (teacher, public, camera) and the consequent assessment, participates in dynamic construction of the body image. Movement vocabulary and body technique inherent to the practiced dance form(s) as well as the type of educational approach, will determine the type of movement experienced and acquired, or considered to be the ideal to achieve and will likely have implications on the building of the self: “A long-term training and body techniques shape, not only the appearance of the body, but a person’s habitual body memory, body schema, and even worldview.” (Parviainen, 1998, p. 59). The quality of lived experiences and learning processes are directly related to how the student feels, imagines and thinks about his body moving in space. In many dance classes, even if there is an emphasis in the kinaesthetic sense, the student may not have the opportunity to explore and deepen inner and fine sensations and feelings. With the exception of some approaches to contemporary dance and improvisation, vocational dance teaching embrace visual modeling, contributing to an externalized view of the body, which alongside with a tuition centred on the teacher’s authority may well contribute to a body image disturbance (Ehrenberg, 2010; Green, 1999; Lussier-Ley, 2013; Oliver, 2008).

¹ The tripartite model (Pylvänäinen, 2003) is proposed from a literature review in the areas of philosophy, psychology, psychiatry and dance/movement therapy

Several authors refer to somatic education² or a somatic approach to dance teaching as an important contribution to what Green (1999) defines as the student's sensory authority, which will rely less on the teacher's feedback and more on kinaesthetic information (Batson, 2009; Green, 1999; Fortin, 2002), allowing to validate not only the experiential body but also the represented body. Re-educating perception, through approaches that provide the investigation of oneself's movement, and values the ability to 'sense' internal messages that emphasize the uniqueness of the body, allows the student to focus on body sensations and develops sensitivity and self-awareness in motion. Somatic techniques are body practices that favour a holistic view of the individual while valuing the perceptual, cognitive and emotional elements associated with movement. They're not based on a coded movement vocabulary, but on the study of elements such as effort modulation, awareness of usual movement patterns and their reorganization, the initiation and intention of movement, and its direction in space. Attention is drawn to the less conscious aspects of movement, allowing its organization to change. Through an investigation process that develops awareness of body mind connection, the student can more clearly recognize the difference between the way he feels the movement and the way he actually moves.

It is important to know the student's perspective on how different body experiences are experienced, perceived and integrated, as well as the implications that the type of learning may have on the conceptualization and assessment of their moving body and consequently on the development of their body image. So, the main question from which the research was developed is: how do the undergraduate dance students construct their body image through the perception of their own movement in a somatic education process?

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to analyse and characterize a somatic educational process as it was experienced and perceived by the participants, in order to obtain the maximum possible comprehension of the complex and subjective phenomenon such as the dance student's construction of body image.

A qualitative research, according to Maxwell (2013) and Patton (2002), allows the researcher to describe and understand processes that take place in specific contexts and in which proper specifications of each individual are highlighted. Due to the subjective nature of the phenomenon, under study, that comprehends sensorial, cognitive and emotional processes, as well as the way both participants and researcher understand these processes, we invoke a multiple method approach. Along with Roller and Lavrakas (2015) we consider that crossing different qualitative methods may well contribute to develop a more profound comprehension of the theme. The methodology procedures were developed to provide the participants with the experience of activities in the field of somatic education, along with reflection about themselves and of the processes involved in the way they experience movement in different moments.

The study was implemented in the participants' natural setting. The researcher, with training in this field and enlarged experience in dance teaching, was directly involved in the activities regarding the study's implementation in all field work phases, particularly in the movement program's construction and lecturing, and all data collection procedures. The researcher's involvement works as an investigation instrument (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) concerning both the participants' field interaction as well as her role in the interpretation and meaning allocation to the participants' perception. The researcher is aware of the mutual influence in her relationship with the participants, and so she adapted several procedures that allow clarification of her intervention within the participants, in particular the detailed description of all the investigation process. Presently, the study stands in the data analysis phase which also demands accuracy and clarity regarding the procedure description, so the researcher keeps a reflexive journal concerning process analysis and data interpretation.

Setting and Participants

The context of higher vocational studies in Dance, especially regarding students from the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Superior School of Dance (Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa, Escola Superior de Dança) was chosen to implement the study. The need to assure the quality of the collected data led us to consider

² Somatic education is defined by Linden (1994) as "the educational field, which examines the structure and function of the body as processes of lived experience, perception and consciousness" (p. 15).

participants with a high level of maturity. The ability to verbalize experiences and body perception - e.g. willingness to question and think about individual and subjective sensations and perceptions – determined the decision to implement the Somatic Movement (SM) program on a group of undergraduate students throughout one semester. The group of participants was composed through a voluntary recruitment that took place in the host institution after clarification sessions were held, regarding the study goals, program (extracurricular training offering), practical session contents and the mandatory attendance of 14 of the 20 scheduled sessions. It was asked to the participants to choose a pseudonym in order to protect their identity. The participants profile are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characterization of study participants by pseudonym, age, gender, under graduation year, and dance experience.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Undergraduation Year	Dance Experience
Amélia	18	Female	2	Classical, Modern and Contemporary Dance
Beatriz	19	Female	2	Classical, Modern and Contemporary Dance
Fernanda	19	Female	2	Contemporary Dance
Leo	25	Female	2	Contemporary and Classical Dance
Leonor	18	Female	1	Contemporary Dance
Micaela	19	Female	2	Classical, Modern and Contemporary Dance
Siul	18	Male	1	Classical and Modern Dance
Soraia	20	Female	2	Classical, Modern and Contemporary Dance
Susana	21	Female	1	Hip Hop
Victória	18	Female	1	Hip Hop and Classical Dance

Only 10 out of the 16 appointed students complied with the attendance integration criteria. The group of 10 students, aged 18 to 22 years old, included 9 female students and 1 male. The students were attending different years of their degree and had different movement experiences, so the population we intended to study was heterogeneous and thus, allowed to explore diversity within a homogenous situation while contributing to a wider and more inclusive vision of the phenomenon, according to Maxwell (2013). The types of dance that were carried out included classical, modern, contemporary, jazz and hip hop, and with practice levels ranging from 2 to 14 years of experience. All but one of the participants had no prior experience with somatic education.

Design of the Study

The investigation was designed to provide the study of the lived experience of a process in a specific spatio-temporal context and was structured in two phases. The first is related to field-work preparation, and consisted on the construction of the SM program and the interview guide. The second phase concerns field-work that includes initial in-depth interviews, the implementation of the movement program with the corresponding data collection through journals, group interviews and direct observation and final in-depth interviews.

The SM program assumes itself as an educational program that aims to develop sensorial awareness competences and reflexion ability, as well as the appropriation of different experimented sensations, within the participant. Its design is based on the somatic education part of the curricular unit of Well-Being Body Techniques that belongs to the curricular plan of the Degree in Dance of the Faculty of Human Kinetics, University of Lisbon (Faculdade de Motricidade Humana da Universidade de Lisboa). The Feldenkrais, Ideokinesis, Bartenieff Fundamentals and Eutonia methods were selected for specifically being acknowledged in literature as representative of the somatic education, (Eddy, 2009; Fortin 2002). These methods include different techniques and insights that were developed accordingly to several fundamental principles. The 20 SM sessions were planned and taught by the researcher around themes that were supported on the following principles: breath, sensing, connection, imagery, initiation, and intention. Breath represents one of the fundamental principles subject to the movement's several methods and somatic insights (Brodie & Lobel, 2004) that acknowledge their potential to establish relations between conscious and unconscious, voluntary and involuntary and interior and exterior of the body. Attending to breath is an

immediate way to connect to ourselves through our body, since it involves our organs, bones, muscles and skin. The breathing pattern is the result of habits, attitudes, beliefs and activities. It is part of the body memories and to the dance students, this pattern also reflects their movement's quality and expressiveness. Developing body sensitivity as it moves in space is another main principle in somatic education. Proprioception is intimately connected to the psychological sense of corporeity and represents a continuous appropriation process of the body itself (Metzinger, 2003). In many somatic techniques, the movement explorations involve to slow down movements, in a relaxed way, with minimum effort to allow acknowledgment of subtle sensations, which in dance practice are commonly unnoticed due to muscular effort sensation. Approaches concern the relationship between movement and gravity, the awareness of postural adjustment and support, the perception of interior and exterior body space, and also skin, bone, and joint awareness. The connectivity principle is addressed from various perspectives by different somatic methods. On Brodie and Lobel's (2004) point of view, the principle of connectivity is linked to the body's structural and functional ability, and its relation with the forces involved in the movement. Internal connectivity refers to the relationship between different parts of the body and their effect on the integration of the body as a whole, and external connectivity relates to the relationship with the environment, such as the ground, and the relationship established with others. Working with imagery is a crosswise principle to all somatic methods. Accessing the kinaesthetic sense through metaphors and images to represent ideas, sensations and actions stimulate the body-mind connection, can ease the re-standardization of certain movements, improve body alignment and contribute to the movement's expressiveness (Geber & Wilson, 2010). Images can be suggested by the teacher or created by the student and used both while at rest and on movement. Lastly, the intention is present in the thought before the action and is responsible for the activation of a particular motor program (Brody & Lobel, 2012). The neuromuscular system works more efficiently if the purpose of the movement is clarified: 'Clarifying intent can produce amazing results in the motor pattern' (Hackney, 2002, p. 257).

The semi-structured interview guides were organized in 3 thematic groups in relationship with the investigation's purpose, according to Silvestre Fialho and Saragoça (2015). Based on the study's specific objectives and literature review, the relevant topics were identified from which the questions were elaborated to ensure the credibility of what is being investigated (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Qualitative studies that were consulted, showed a focus on the dancer's moving experiences as a central point for exploring different topics, due to in-depth interviews to dancers: Ehrenberg (2015); Legrand and Ravn (2009); Hanley (2004); Long (2002); Lussier-Ley (2013); Potter (2008); Ravn and Hansen (2012); Rouhiainen (2003); Wilson (2009). Most of these studies don't present the interview guide, and some of them include the analysed issues and data discussion as a narrative. Regarding studies that include the interview guide, we point out Hanley (2004) who develops a qualitative exploratory study from Schilder's (1999) core propositions according to the role of movement in body image structuralization. Lussier-Ley's (2013) study, through in-depth interviews, also explores interrelations between identity, creativity, emotions and the body in the dancer's lived experience context. The issues concerning emotions and body were a reference when it came to select the type of questions to include in our study's interviews. According to Roller and Lavrakas (2015) the in-depth interview's guide should allow some flexibility in order to permit the interviewer to lead the interviewee through his speech and deepen the knowledge within a certain topic, since it is the interviewer who masters the topics that are handled in the interview (Creswell, 2012; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015; Silvestre et al., 2015). By doing so, sufficient information on the theme will be raised, maximizing the value of collected data. With this in mind, the researcher asked probe questions (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Creswell, 2012; Given, 2008) following the answered questions, in order to enlarge and clarify the interviewee's ideas, and encouraging him to keep close to the lived experience (Creswell, 2012, p. 221). To ensure internal and external validity, the interview guides were evaluated by 3 experts (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015) in human kinetics and dance. The interview guides were tested through a semi-structured interview model made to a non-participant dance student, to verify the adequacy of the questions to the themes that were to be developed in the interviews. Some assessments were made following these procedures.

Group discussions occurred after practice in 10 out of the 20 sessions and were essentially directed to allow participants to question and verbalize thoughts and sensations arisen during practice. They were audio recorded and verbatim transcribed, and were able to provide information about the appropriation of the lived experience. During the intervention, the researcher used direct observation and a field-note record to write down her impressions on the ongoing sessions. The participant's journal consisted on a small notebook where personal sensations, impressions, thoughts and considerations regarding their experience,

were recorded in text or drawings and contributed to the organization of timeline information and providing topics to be explored in the final interview.

We developed three sub-questions from the above-mentioned main question, which helped us to delimit the study area and structure the investigation process. To summarize the relationship between the study's sub-questions and methodology procedures we organized table 2 below:

Table 2. Research sub-questions, methodological approach, data collected, procedures application, and data analysis method (adapted from Rato & Alves, 2019).

Sub-question	Methodological approach	Data Collected	Procedures application	Data analysis method
How does the dance student perceive, conceptualize and appreciate his movement?	In-depth semi-structured interview	<i>Verbatim</i> transcriptions from audio recordings	Beginning and end of the Intervention	Thematic Analysis: Framework analysis approach (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003)
How is the student lived experience of the moving body in a performance situation?	Interview based on the Explicitation method (Vermersch, 2003)	Idem	Idem	Thematic Analysis - static analysis - temporal analysis (Vermersch, 2018)
How are the fundamental principles of somatic practices experienced and embodied by the dance student throughout the process?	SM program developed and applied by the researcher Participant Journals Group discussions In-depth semi-structured interview	Researcher field notes Text and draw <i>Verbatim</i> transcriptions Idem	20 sessions over 3 months All the sessions In 10 of the 20 sessions Beginning and end of the Intervention	Thematic Analysis: Framework analysis approach (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003)

To obtain adequate data on the sub-question on how does the dance student understand, conceptualize and appreciate his own movement and that is related to the image properties concept, we carried out semi-structured in-depth interviews composed of open questions before and after the SM program. In this way, we were able to access the knowledge and perceptions of the participants regarding their body experience in practical dance class and their own movement, which according to Hanley (2004) 'encourages the development of insight into the body image' (p. 145).

The sub-question on how the dancer experiences the body movement within his performance sends us back to the lived experience of the body self. In order to access the participant's experience in detail rather than their opinions about the experience, we chose a phenomenological approach through Vermersch's (2003) explicitation interviews. This technique for which the researcher had specific training, allows both the participant himself and the researcher to access the pre-reflexive memory, in other words, the implicit knowledge subject to a given action through a fine and detailed description of the ongoing action.

The sub-question on how the principles of somatic education are experienced and incorporated by the dance student throughout the process, led to the construction and implementation of the movement program, in order to provide participants with the experience of a somatic education process, collect data continuously in each session through participants' journals and group discussions, enabling the researcher to observe the process directly. For the final interviews the researcher read the participants' journals, the group interview transcripts and her field notes in order to deepen and clarify some of the interviewee's ideas regarding their experience.

Data analysis procedures

The considerable volume of data collected, as well as the need to cross-check information from different sources, namely individual and group interviews, logbooks and direct observation, led to the decision to use NVivo software to support data organization and analysis.

According to Minayo and Costa (2019), the first step in the data analysis process consists of ordering and organizing the empirical and secondary material. This procedure was carried out using the software mentioned above, resulting in the import and organization of primary sources, such as the contents of the interviews, group discussions and logbooks, but also the contextual elements that concern the fieldwork, namely the plans of the sessions and texts about the contents covered, as well as the texts and theoretical references that delimit and support the present investigation.

Data is being processed by using thematic analysis. According to each sub question and type of data, we adopted different approaches. The framework analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) is a flexible tool based in the creation of a thematic structure to classify and to organize data according to the emerging main themes, concepts and categories. We are using this approach to analyse all the data except for the explicitation interviews. This approach allows to compare data across participants as well as within each participant story, which is fundamental to study the dance student's self-perceptions of bodily movement as well as their lived experiences in the Somatic Education process. The stages of this method are 1) familiarization, which includes transcription and reading of the data, 2) constructing a thematic framework, through an initial coding (that can either be a priori and emerged from the familiarization stage) and that must be developed and refined in the subsequent steps, 3) indexing, that consist to apply the thematic framework to the data, using codes to identify parts of the data that correspond to different themes, 4) charting, by using the headings of the thematic structure which allows to read across the whole data set, and 5) mapping and interpretation by searching for patterns, associations, concepts, and explanations. This method allows both a case and theme based approach to data analysis.

Table 3 presents an example of an initial thematic framework constructed around the theme of body perception. The sub-themes are volume and perceived changes. It includes 3 of the 10 participants. The quotes were extracted from three different data sources (students journals, discussion groups and semi-structured interviews) and refers to the lived experience of a session on skin sensitivity.

Table 3 Example of an initial thematic framework

Body perception	Beatriz	Amélia	Susana
Volume	“In this moment I’ve a quite clear sensation of the contour and the volume of my body.” (Group discussion)	“I had a more precise notion of the area of the skin and of the contours of my body, it seemed that inside I was hollow.” (Journal)	“I had the sensation of being a container with air inside.” (Group discussion)
Changes	“I am enjoying more my movement, my movement awareness lasts for a longer period of time (...) I think more in my intention, focus or sensation when I am moving, than before, that I was just moving ...” (Final interview)	“I am more conscious now of the different parts of my body, that the foot is moving, that I am thinking about an elbow... I am more conscious of the specific parts of the body...before it was more like a shadow, everything feel the same way. Now it is more clear what i am moving, before it was everything of the same color, now I have many different colors in my movement.” (Final interview)	“Now, my body understands better the internal and external stimuli (...) it (the body) now has a better connection with the inside and the outside.” (Journal)

The framework analysis is a flexible tool that is compatible both with inductive and deductive approaches. In our study, although we had some a priori concepts we want to explore, the nature of the research questions points to a more inductive approach, where most of the identified themes emerge

directly from data as in the case of the examples above. We are using this approach to analyse all the data minus the explicitation interviews.

The thematic analysis of the data from explicitation interviews will follow Vermersch (2018) guidelines. At the beginning of the interview, we asked the participant to choose a specific moment of a recent public presentation. In the following section, Amélia, guided by the researcher, describes the unfolding of an action, her experience in a dance duet on stage:

“At that moment I was holding on, cheating and holding on to the box like this, and I knew I couldn't put my fingers higher than the box because they would show ... now I knew that Beatriz had to move. But before she moved (we were both inside the box) I could hear us both breathe, we were quite panting. (...) It was just when I stopped and stood in my position that... I try to control my breath so that I don't breathe too heavily through my back, so it can't be noticed because I didn't find it interesting, so I use my belly so that my breathing doesn't stand out.”

In this excerpt, Amélia describe what she is doing, how and why she is doing it, how she gets information from herself, from her partner and from the environment. Being a phenomenological approach intended to access to the implicit knowledge of the dance student during the unfold of an action, that in this case it's a dance performance, the analysis has two different levels: a static analysis and a temporal analysis, (Vermersch, 2018). The static analysis is the first approach to data and implies the segmentation of units of meaning, and the requalification of each unit through interpretation. Categories like context, environment, comments, judgement, action, objective, internal state are assigned to the descriptive content. The temporal analysis, in which the lived moment is understood as a process with a temporal unfold, follow the static one. Then, a new cycle begins, with another static analysis informed by the previous static and temporal analysis, and so on. This thematic analysis process usually takes 4 or 5 cycles.

To understand the influence of somatic education within the dance student's body image, the analysis of data involves comparing and cross-checking the different sources: the interview's and group discussion's verbatim transcriptions, texts and drawings from the participants' journals as well as the researcher's field notes. The triangulation represents an important feature of the data analysis in this study because each method reveals different aspects of the same phenomena. Confronting the researcher observations with the student journals or verifying the consistency of information given by the participant in two different moments about the same experience, are some of the procedures adopted to better understand and integrate data from different sources.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a result of the scientific literature review we made on dance student's somatic education and body image as a subjective experience of the body in motion, we followed a qualitative methodological design by using multi-methods to analyse and characterize a process of somatic education as it was experienced and learned by the participants. Self-attention to the body includes both conscious and unconscious characteristics and each method had a specific and different contribution to access the sensations, perceptions and thoughts of undergraduate dance students. The explicitation interviews constitutes an innovative methodology to access to the pre-reflective thought of a past experience, the journals and the discussion groups encouraged the participants to describe and to reflect about their experiences immediately after they occurred and in the semi-structured interviews, the researcher, that was also an observer of the process, guided the participant in order to deepen the most relevant issues.

With the intention to contribute to a methodological explanation, we have presented the details of the research design, including the research questions, instruments, the justification for the data collection methods as well as the analysis methods, giving examples of how the data are being analyzed.

Several collection methods made it possible to triangulate data from diverse sources in this study. Accordingly to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), this strategy reduces the risk of conclusions reflecting only the trends of one method, and allows a better evaluation of the validation and explanations that might be developed.

Advantages were found in the conscious and concurrent usage of multi-methods, mainly in the semi-structured in-depth interview, the explicitation interview, group discussions and participant journals throughout our intervention, as well as the researcher's field notes. These advantages add a clearer understanding of how to explore highly subjective concepts such as body experiences, as well as clarifying the nature of the researcher's intentions. With a multi-method integration function based essentially on data triangulation and the exploration of the concept of movement and the body image dynamics, the

methodological design implies a commitment to discover a special type of data. In this case, data related to cognitive processes, sensations and emotions directly linked to the experience of the body. *This project was approved by the Ethics Committee of Human Kinetics Faculty, University of Lisbon.*

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