

ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE

Dance faculty

**BACHELOR'S THESIS**

Prague, 2023

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**Study condition in Dance Education  
in Republic of Korea and The Czech Republic**

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Date of thesis defense:

Academic title granted: BA

AKADEMIE MÚZICKÝCH UMĚNÍ V PRAZE

Taneční fakulta

Katedra taneční pedagogiky

**BAKALÁŘSKÁ**

**Podmínky studia v taneční výchově  
v Korejské republice a České republice**

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Datum obhajoby:

Přidělovaný akademický titul: BcA.

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## Key Words

Dance education, Republic of Korea, Czech Republic, Dance conservatories, Cultural influences, Comparative analysis, Curriculum, International collaboration, Western culture, European dance heritage

## Abstract

This thesis provides a comparative analysis of dance education in the Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic, examining the cultural, educational contexts and student's personal experience that shape the respective approaches to dance instruction. The study investigates the histories, curricula, and unique characteristics of select dance conservatories in both countries, offering insights into the diverse and dynamic nature of dance education. The research also explores the broader cultural factors that have influenced the development of dance education, such as the Republic of Korea's acceptance of Western culture and the Czech Republic's European dance heritage.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of fostering global understanding and collaboration within the field of dance education. By illuminating the unique approaches to dance instruction in different countries, the thesis encourages greater collaboration and exchange of best practices among dance communities worldwide. Furthermore, the research serves as a foundation for further exploration into dance education systems in other countries and regions, contributing to the global dialogue on the role of dance education in nurturing cultural understanding, artistic expression, and personal growth.

## Acknowledgements

엄마, 아빠, 가족들 모두, 항상 사랑하고 고맙습니다.  
짧지 않은 여정에 함께해 준 헤인이에게도 고마움을 전합니다.

Thanks to everyone who supported me during this journey.

## *Table of Contents*

### Introduction

#### 1. Social difference

- 1.1. The position of ballet in the Republic of Korea
- 1.2. How South Korean accept western culture
- 1.3. Cultural influences, rules and back grounds

#### 2. Situation of students in Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic

- 2.1. Schooling system in Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic
  - 2.1.1. Characteristics of the Republic of Korea's schooling system
  - 2.1.2. Social Aspects of the Republic of Korea's schooling system
  - 2.1.3. Characteristics of the Czech Republic's schooling system
  - 2.1.4. Social Aspects of the Czech Republic's schooling system

#### 2.2. List of Dance Conservatories

- 2.2.1. Dance Conservatories in the Republic of Korea
- 2.2.2. Dance Conservatories in the Czech Republic

#### 2.3. History and characteristic of Dance Conservatories

- 2.3.1. History and characteristic of Dance Conservatories in the Republic of Korea
- 2.3.2. History and characteristic of Dance Conservatories in the Czech Republic

#### 3. Focused Analysis of Specific Dance Conservatories: An In-Depth Exploration

- 3.1. Goyang High School of Arts
- 3.2. Kyungbuk Arts High School
- 3.3. Chungnam Arts High School
- 3.4. Evaluation
- 3.5. Dance Conservatory Hl. the city of Prague
- 3.6. Duncan Center Conservatory
- 3.7. Evaluation

#### 4. Comparison between Korean Arts High School and Czech Dance Conservatories

### Conclusion

## ***Introduction***

Dance, as a transcending the limitations of language and cultural barriers, making it an essential aspect of human expression. In today's globalized world, the significance of dance education cannot be overstated, with its potential to foster creativity, physical fitness, and cultural appreciation in young minds. This bachelor thesis delves into a comparative analysis of dance education in the Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic, exploring the cultural, institutional, and social aspects that shape the dance conservatory experience for teenagers in these two countries.

The Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic, situated on opposite ends of the Eurasian continent, offer a unique juxtaposition of cultural and historical contexts. The vibrant and intricate traditional Korean dance forms, such as Seungmu and Buchaechum, contrast sharply with the rich Czech dance heritage rooted in Czech Folklore. These diverse backgrounds provide a fertile ground for a comparative study, revealing the ways in which cultural differences influence the pedagogy, curriculum, and objectives of dance education in both countries.

At the core of this research lies the examination of the schooling system of dance conservatories in the Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic. The study investigates the general schooling system, list of dance conservatories and their backgrounds, structure and characteristics, social aspects and Individual experiences of the students. Furthermore, It explores how these factors contribute to the overall quality of dance education and the opportunities available to young aspiring dancers.

A pivotal period in a student's life, adolescence is marked by rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive development. The teenage years present a unique set of challenges and opportunities for those pursuing dance education, as they strive to balance their artistic aspirations with academic and social demands. This thesis examines the role of dance education in the lives of teenagers in the Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic, focusing on the impact of dance training on their personal growth, social integration, and future prospects.

To gain insight into the everyday realities of dance conservatory students, this research methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the students' experiences, as well as the aspirations, motivations, and challenges that they face. In addition, it seeks to uncover the goals of dance education in both countries, as articulated by students.

Although It has not been an easy investigation. As the curriculum of HAMU Dance Department I had a chance to visit Prague State Conservatory to observe the class and to have the experience with teaching the students In person. As I was communicating with the students in the closest way I found a lot of interesting factors in the short matter of time. On the other hand, In the Republic of Korea, It was hard to find the accessible resource publicly. I tried to connect with the conservatories officially and personally, but It wasn't possible to keep in contact with them as the access to the Information about the school was prohibited to the public. However, redirecting the perspective from outside of the conservatory, to the Inner side made a huge Impact to this thesis and as well as the results.

By shedding light on the multifaceted dimensions of dance education in the Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic, this thesis seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the subject and foster greater understanding and appreciation of the role of dance in today's global society. The findings of this research may serve as a valuable resource for dance educators, students, and policymakers, paving the way for future collaboration and exchange between these two diverse and fascinating cultures.

## ***1. Social differences***

### **1. 1. The position of ballet in the Republic of Korea**

The Republic of Korea, known for its rich cultural heritage and traditional art forms, has witnessed a remarkable growth in its dance education sector in recent years. While traditional Korean dance forms like Seungmu and Buchaechum continue to thrive, the introduction and development of ballet in the country has significantly contributed to the diversification of dance education. The position of ballet in the Republic of Korea is rooted in its historical trajectory, the influence of international ballet companies, and the growing local interest in this classical dance form.

<sup>1</sup>Ballet was introduced to South Korea in the early 20th century, primarily due to the influence of Russia and other Western countries. The first professional ballet company, the Universal Ballet Company, was established in 1984, marking the beginning of Korea's journey in professional ballet. Since then, the number of ballet companies and schools has grown exponentially, leading to the emergence of ballet as an essential part of the Korean dance scene.

The increasing popularity of ballet in South Korea can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the country's exposure to international ballet companies and artists, through tours and cultural exchange programs, has played a significant role in the growth of ballet education and appreciation. Renowned ballet companies, such as the Bolshoi Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet, and the Royal Ballet, have performed in South Korea, inspiring local dancers and audiences alike.

Secondly, the success of Korean ballet dancers on the international stage has fueled the interest and ambition of young aspiring dancers in the country. Talented Korean ballet dancers, such as Kim Joo-won, Park Sae-eun, and Seo Hee, have achieved considerable recognition and success in major international ballet companies. Their achievements have not only raised the profile of Korean ballet but also served as an inspiration for the next generation of dancers.

Another crucial factor in the growing prominence of ballet in South Korea is the support and investment from both the government and private sectors. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, along with private foundations and sponsors, have facilitated the development of ballet education by funding ballet schools, providing scholarships, and organizing international ballet

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<sup>1</sup>Universal ballet. Universal Ballet. Universal ballet [online]. 2024. Available from: [https://web.archive.org/web/20240423030414/http://www.universalballet.com/en/bbs/content.php?co\\_id=aboutubc](https://web.archive.org/web/20240423030414/http://www.universalballet.com/en/bbs/content.php?co_id=aboutubc) [Accessed 23 April 2024]

competitions, such as the Korea International Ballet Competition. This financial support has enabled talented students to access high-quality ballet education and pursue professional careers in dance.

Furthermore, South Korea's growing middle-class population has created a demand for diverse cultural and artistic experiences, which has led to a growing interest in ballet as a form of culture. As a classical and prestigious art form, ballet has attracted the attention of Korean families, who consider it an essential part of a well-rounded education. As a result, enrollment in ballet schools has skyrocketed, reflecting the younger generation's desire for cultural enrichment and self-improvement.

Despite the progress made in ballet education, there remain several challenges in the Republic of Korea. The competition for limited spots in professional ballet companies is intense, and the career trajectory for ballet dancers is often uncertain. Additionally, the country's ballet education system faces the challenge of balancing the preservation of Korean cultural identity with the adoption of international ballet standards and techniques.

In conclusion, the position of ballet in the Republic of Korea has been on a steady rise, driven by the country's exposure to international ballet, the success of Korean dancers on the world stage, and the growing interest in diverse cultural experiences among the population. While ballet continues to gain momentum, it is essential to address the challenges faced by the ballet education sector to ensure its sustainable growth and the continued enrichment of South Korea's dance landscape.

## **1. 2. How South Korean accept western culture**

South Korea's acceptance of Western culture is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has evolved over time due to a combination of socio-economic, political, and cultural factors. This process of embracing Western culture, while also preserving and celebrating South Korea's unique cultural identity, has resulted in a dynamic and diverse cultural landscape. In this context, several key factors can be identified as contributing to South Korea's acceptance of Western culture:

<sup>2</sup>Rapid Modernization: Following the Korean War, South Korea embarked on an ambitious journey of economic development and modernization. The country's transformation from a primarily agrarian society to a leading global economic power brought about significant changes in its social, cultural, and political fabric. This rapid modernization exposed South Koreans to Western ideas, values, and lifestyles, leading to a gradual adoption of various aspects of Western culture.

<sup>3</sup>Exposure to Global Media and Arts: The advent of mass media and the subsequent proliferation of the internet and social media platforms have made it easier for South Koreans to access and consume Western media content. Movies, television shows, music, and literature from Western countries have become increasingly popular among South Koreans, exposing them to diverse cultural expressions and narratives. This widespread exposure to global media and arts has played a crucial role in fostering an appreciation and understanding of Western culture.

Desire for Cultural Exchange and Collaboration: South Korea's openness to the world, coupled with its eagerness to engage in cultural exchange and collaboration, has significantly contributed to the acceptance of Western culture. International cultural events, performances, and exhibitions have provided opportunities for South Koreans to experience and learn about Western arts and traditions. Additionally, collaborations between Korean and Western artists, musicians, and designers have facilitated cross-cultural dialogue and creative fusion, further enriching the country's cultural landscape.

Education and Language: South Korea's education system has also played a role in fostering the acceptance of Western culture. The emphasis on learning English for 12 years and the incorporation of Western literature, history, and philosophy in the curriculum have exposed South Korean students to diverse perspectives and ideas. Moreover, the growing number of South Koreans studying or working abroad has further facilitated cultural exchange and the adoption of Western cultural elements.

Despite embracing various aspects of Western culture, South Korea has been successful in maintaining and celebrating its unique cultural identity. Traditional arts, crafts, music, and dance continue to be valued and promoted, ensuring that the nation's rich cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. This delicate balance between the adoption of Western culture and the preservation of traditional Korean values and customs has created a vibrant and diverse cultural landscape in the country.

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<sup>2</sup>KIM, Eun Mee. *Big Business, Strong State*. State University of New York Press, 1997. ISBN 9781438408965.

<sup>3</sup>SHIM, Doobo. Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia. *Media, Culture & Society* [online]. 2006. Vol. 28, no. 1, p. 2544. DOI 10.1177/0163443706059278. Available from: 10.1177/0163443706059278 [Accessed 23 April 2024]

In summary, South Korea's acceptance of Western culture can be attributed to factors such as rapid modernization, exposure to global media and arts, the desire for cultural exchange and collaboration, and education. While embracing Western culture, South Korea has also managed to maintain and celebrate its unique cultural identity, resulting in a dynamic and diverse cultural environment.

### **1. 3. Cultural Influences, Rules and Back grounds**

In order to understand the dance education system in South Korea, it is crucial to understand the cultural influences, rules, and backgrounds that have shaped the country's society and arts sector. This chapter will explore various aspects of South Korean culture, including the significance of Confucianism, the importance of hierarchy and social norms, the role of family and education, and the influence of traditional arts.

<sup>4</sup>Confucianism in South Korea has played a significant role in shaping South Korean society and its cultural values. As a dominant social and ethical philosophy, Confucianism emphasizes the importance of virtues such as filial piety, respect for authority, and the cultivation of moral character. This philosophical framework has impacted various aspects of South Korean culture, including dance, where respect for teachers, adherence to traditional techniques, and the pursuit of excellence are highly valued.

**Hierarchy and Social Norms** In South Korean society is characterized by a strong sense of hierarchy and adherence to social norms because of the influence of Confucianism. This is evident in the way people interact with each other, with respect for age, social status, and authority playing a crucial role in shaping interpersonal relationships. In the context of dance education, this hierarchical structure can influence the dynamics between students and teachers, as well as among the students themselves. The importance of respecting authority and observing social norms may also impact the way students approach learning and collaboration in dance conservatories.

**Influence of Traditional Arts** In South Korea has a rich history of traditional arts, Including dance, music, and theater. While Western dance forms have gained popularity in recent years, traditional

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4PALLEY, Howard A. Social Policy and the Elderly in South Korea: Confucianism, Modernization, and Development. Asian Survey [online]. 1992. Vol. 32, no. 9, p. 787801. DOI 10.1525/as.1992.32.9.00p0200i. Available from: 10.1525/as.1992.32.9.00p0200i[Accessed 23 April 2024]

Korean dance remains an important part of the country's cultural heritage. Most of dance conservatories in South Korea offer training in both Western and traditional Korean dance, highlighting the influence of traditional arts on the country's dance education landscape. Students often draw inspiration from both Western and Korean dance traditions, resulting in a unique fusion of styles and techniques.

By examining the impact of Confucianism, the importance of hierarchy and social norms and the influence of traditional arts, we can gain a deeper understanding of the factors that shape the experiences of dance students in South Korea. This cultural context also provides a valuable point of comparison when exploring dance education in the Czech Republic, allowing for a nuanced examination of the similarities and differences between the two countries' dance education systems.

#### **1. 4. Experiences with private dance academies and effect on body image during the period in dance academies**

My first experience with dance happened going to watch ballet performance in universal art center. I am not sure what it was but I think it was nutcracker. I was amazed with everything what I was seeing. After that my mom enrolled me to a ballet class for children in the cultural center inside the mall right next to my house at that time. There were a lot of girls with pretty dresses with white tights and ballet slippers. For few years, I was very into dancing(playing) ballet and improvising to my mom's piano. That is how I grew up to love dance. And dance with freedom. Then I stopped dancing when I entered elementary school.

6 years later, when I entered middle school, I was feeling pressured to think what to do with my life. As I was more thinking and thinking I was feeling more and more passion to dance. To express myself as it is. (not thinking about the circumstances) The first impression of private academies(hakwon) was very intimidating. I felt very exposed just to exist in the studio. But above all that I was just happy to dance. I was dancing for hours and hours when everybody went home until I stay alone to dance. After I got to close the academy by myself.

During this process I was taught by many teachers. Getting to adapt the teaching style of different teachers was challenging. But other than that, what I will tell you right now, I don't believe it would

have happened in every academies. But as I have asked to other fellow dancers through the experience that I have been through, it is a common case to get hit by the teachers during the class when everyone is watching or getting insults from teachers about the body shape. I am writing about the education of conservatories of Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic as itself, but with that, I would like to tell my experience and point of view of the Republic of Korea's dance educational goal's background.

There were many sexual harassment and assault happen through out the period when I was taking the class in my first ballet academy. Because the specific body shape that ballet pursue, often teachers used physical force on students and tell them to not eat, make them starve and send students to plastic surgery to change the body and face with external pressure. This has happened throughout my dance career in the Republic of Korea.

With the <sup>5</sup>Interview I had with my formal dance academies head teacher Jiyun Pyo said, "In my days, the conservatory called the dance department students one by one into the teacher's office and said, "You need nose surgery, you need chin shaving surgery, you need liposuction because you're not losing weight, you need eye and nose surgery," and connected the students to local plastic surgery clinics. It is not just from the head teacher, a lot of fellow dancer also had a same experience through out their learning process.

Body Image is a person's mental perception of his or her physical appearance <sup>6</sup>(Luckmann & Sorenson, 1993). <sup>7</sup>Richardson et al. (2012) said, "Adolescence is a period in which the self is formed, and this begins with one's body image." In addition, <sup>8</sup>Seol Hyun-jin (2009) said, "For adolescents who have not established their identity, they are greatly influenced by sociocultural attitudes toward their appearance, and emotional anxiety overlaps with physical anxiety, resulting in negative attitudes toward their appearance and body."

These study shows that the teacher's behavior is very influential to the students mental health especially when they are in their Adolescence period.

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<sup>5</sup>From an informal interview with Mrs.Pyo, in Seoul, on (20 April 2022)

<sup>6</sup>BLACK, Joyce M., 1993. Luckmann and Sorensen medical-surgical nursing. Philadelphia: Saunders. ISBN 9780721635064.

<sup>7</sup>RICHARDSON, Shanel M., PAXTON, Susan J. and THOMSON, Julie S., 2009. Is BodyThink an efficacious body image and self-esteem program? A controlled evaluation with adolescents. *Body Image* [online]. 2009. Vol. 6, no. 2, p. 7582. DOI [10.1016/j.bodyim.2008.11.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2008.11.001). Available from: [10.1016/j.bodyim.2008.11.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2008.11.001) [Accessed 25 April 2024].

<sup>8</sup>SEOL, Hyunjin, 2009. A study on appearance satisfaction and beauty behavior according to socio-cultural factors regarding the appearance of adolescents. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Sungshin Women's University Graduate School.

## ***2. Situation of students in the Republic of Korea and Czech Republic***

### ***2.1. Schooling System in the Republic of Korea and Czech Republic***

This chapter provides a foundation for understanding dance education in South Korea and Czech Republic by examining the broader schooling system of the country's general education system. A strong educational system lays the groundwork for specialized fields like dance education. Understanding how students learn and progress through the Korean education system will provide valuable context for analyzing dance education practices later in this thesis.

The South Korean general education system is a highly centralized and standardized system overseen by the Ministry of Education. It consists of four main stages:

- **Preschool (Optional):** Most children attend preschool for socialization and basic skills development before entering primary school.
- **Primary Education (Compulsory):** Six years of primary education (grades 1-6) lay the foundation for literacy, Korean, English, mathematics, science, social studies, P.E and other core subjects.
- **Middle School (Compulsory):** Three years of middle school (grades 7-9) build upon the knowledge acquired in primary school and introduce new subjects.
- **High School (Compulsory):** Three years of high school (grades 10-12) are crucial for university entrance exams. Students may specialize in specific tracks depending on their academic goals.

This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding dance education in the Czech Republic by examining the broader schooling system of the country's general education system.

The educational system a student navigates shapes their foundational knowledge and skills, influencing their path towards specialized fields like dance education. Analyzing the Czech education system will provide valuable context for exploring dance education practices later in this thesis.

The Czech Republic operates a decentralized education system with some national oversight. The Ministry of Education sets national curriculum frameworks, but schools have some autonomy in curriculum development and teaching methods. The system is divided into several stages:

- **Preschool (Optional):** Many children attend preschool for socialization and basic skill development before entering primary school.
- **Primary Education (Compulsory):** Nine years of primary education (grades 1-9) form the foundation, focusing on core subjects like language, mathematics, science, and social studies. This is further divided into two cycles: a five-year lower cycle (grades 1-5) and a four-year upper cycle (grades 6-9).
- **Secondary Education (Tracks):** After primary school, students transition to various secondary education tracks depending on their academic goals and interests. These tracks include:
  - **Gymnasium (General Secondary School):** An eight-year program (grades 6-12) preparing students for university entrance exams with a strong focus on academic subjects.
  - **Secondary Vocational Schools (SOU):** Three or four-year programs (grades 1-3 or 1-4) providing vocational training and qualifications for specific careers.
  - **Conservatories:** Specialized schools offering intensive training in artistic disciplines, including dance. (Further details on conservatories will be covered in a separate section)

### **2.1.1 Characteristics of the Republic of Korea's Schooling System**

South Korea's general schooling system boasts a unique blend of characteristics that have contributed to its perceived success and undeniable competitiveness. Here's a closer look:

- **Rapid Development and Emphasis on Achievement:** Following the Korean War, the government prioritized education as a pillar of national development. This resulted in a rapidly expanding education system with a strong emphasis on academic achievement. Standardized testing plays a significant role in student placement, school rankings, and university entrance.

- **National Curriculum and Centralized Control:** The Ministry of Education sets a national curriculum for all schools, ensuring consistency and a focus on core subjects like math, science, and language. This centralized control streamlines the system but may limit local innovation and cater to a single learning style.
- **Focus on Rote Learning and Exam Preparation:** The emphasis on standardized testing often translates into a teaching approach focused on rote memorization and exam preparation. While this method fosters strong foundational skills, it can stifle creativity and critical thinking.
- **Hagwon Culture (Supplementary Academies):** A unique feature is the prevalence of Hagwons, private after-school academies offering supplemental education. While Hagwons can provide enrichment, they contribute to a pressure-cooker learning environment and create an additional financial burden for families.

South Korea's education system is a double-edged sword. While it boasts remarkable success in raising literacy rates and building a highly skilled workforce through its emphasis on standardized testing and centralized curriculum, this intense competition comes at a cost. Students face immense pressure to excel, leading to high stress and anxiety can lead to mental illness, The relentless focus on academics often leaves little time for extracurricular activities, potentially limiting opportunities for students interested in dance education. Additionally, the reliance on private Hagwon academies exacerbates social inequality, as access to these resources depends heavily on family finances. Understanding these characteristics is crucial for appreciating the context of dance education in South Korea. While the system produces strong academic results, it's important to acknowledge the pressure and potential limitations it creates for students pursuing artistic endeavors.

## **2. 1. 2 Social Aspects of the Republic of Korea's schooling system**

The South Korean general schooling system, while lauded for its academic achievements, fosters a unique social environment for students. Understanding these social aspects is crucial for analyzing the landscape of dance education in the country. Here, we explore some key characteristics and their potential impact on dance education practices.

### **Emphasis on Conformity and Hierarchy**

The relentless pursuit of academic excellence in South Korea fosters a culture of conformity and groupthink. Students prioritize fitting in and achieving high scores on standardized tests over expressing individuality. Strict teacher-student hierarchies limit open discussion and questioning of authority, potentially creating a sense of distance between students and teachers. This emphasis on conformity and hierarchy can discourage students from pursuing dance education, which may be perceived as unconventional or risky compared to traditional academic pathways. Additionally, the rigid structure might limit opportunities for creative exploration, a vital aspect of dance education.

### **Importance of Peer Relationships**

Despite the competitive nature of the system, strong peer relationships hold significant value. Students often form close bonds with classmates who share their academic struggles and successes. This emphasis on peer connection presents a potential opportunity for dance education. Dance educators can leverage these existing bonds to create supportive and collaborative learning environments where students feel comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves creatively.

### **Limited Exposure to Diversity**

The education system tends to be homogenous, with limited opportunities for students exposed to people from diverse backgrounds. This limited exposure can restrict their understanding and appreciation of different artistic expressions, including dance styles from other cultures. Dance education can play a vital role in addressing this limitation by exposing students to various dance forms and fostering intercultural awareness.

### **Impact on Dance Education**

The social aspects of the Korean schooling system present both challenges and opportunities for dance education. While pressure to conform and limited creative expression pose hurdles, the emphasis on peer relationships offers a valuable foundation for building supportive learning environments. Dance education in South Korea can benefit from acknowledging these social dynamics and adapting practices to encourage individuality, collaboration, and appreciation for diverse artistic expressions.

By understanding the social fabric woven within the Korean school system, we gain a deeper appreciation for the context in which dance education thrives and the potential it holds to foster creativity and self-expression despite the system's limitations.

### **2.1.3 Characteristics of the Czech Republic's schooling system**

The Czech Republic's general schooling system operates under a decentralized structure with national oversight. This chapter explores the key characteristics of this system and their potential influence on dance education in the country.

#### **Decentralized System with National Curriculum Frameworks**

Unlike the centralized system of South Korea, the Czech Republic offers more autonomy to schools. The Ministry of Education sets national curriculum frameworks, ensuring a basic level of consistency across the country. However, schools have some flexibility in curriculum development and teaching methods, allowing them to adapt to local needs and educational philosophies.

#### **Focus on Balanced Education**

The Czech education system aims to develop students' intellectual abilities alongside practical skills and creativity. The curriculum incorporates core subjects like language, mathematics, science, and social studies, while also encouraging artistic expression and exploration. This focus on a balanced education can provide a strong foundation for students interested in pursuing dance education later.

#### **Tracking System at Secondary Level**

After primary school (nine years), students transition to various secondary education tracks based on their academic goals and interests. These tracks include:

- **Gymnasium (General Secondary School):** An eight-year program (grades 6-12) preparing students for university entrance exams with a strong academic focus.
- **Secondary Vocational Schools (SOU):** Three or four-year programs (grades 1-3 or 1-4) providing vocational training and qualifications for specific careers.

- **Conservatories:** Specialized schools offering intensive training in artistic disciplines, including dance. (Further details on conservatories will be covered in a separate section)

This tracking system at a young age can have implications for dance education. Students who choose vocational schools or non-gymnasium tracks might have fewer opportunities for dance education within the general schooling system.

### **Impact on Dance Education**

The characteristics of the Czech schooling system present a mixed picture for dance education. The decentralized structure allows for potentially more flexibility and integration of arts education into the curriculum compared to the highly centralized system of South Korea. The focus on a balanced education can nurture well-rounded students with the potential for strong artistic expression. However, the tracking system at the secondary level might limit access to dance education for students in certain tracks.

Understanding these characteristics provides a valuable foundation for analyzing dance education practices within the Czech Republic. The following chapters will explore how dance education is addressed within the general schooling system, vocational schools, and specialized conservatories.

## **2. 1. 4. Social Aspects of Czech Republic's schooling system**

The Czech Republic's general schooling system fosters a distinct social environment for students compared to South Korea. Understanding these social aspects offers valuable context for analyzing how dance education functions within the Czech education system. Here, we explore some key characteristics and their potential influence on dance education practices.

### **Emphasis on Collaboration and Critical Thinking**

Unlike the South Korean system's focus on conformity and rote learning, the Czech system encourages collaboration and critical thinking. The decentralized structure allows for more diverse teaching

methods, potentially fostering a more interactive and discussion-based learning environment. This emphasis on collaboration can benefit dance education by creating opportunities for students to work together, share ideas, and provide constructive feedback – all crucial aspects of artistic development in dance.

### **Focus on Individual Expression**

The Czech education system, with its emphasis on a balanced education, creates space for individual expression beyond academics. This can be particularly beneficial for dance education, as it allows students to explore their creativity and develop their artistic voice through movement.

### **Social Cohesion Within Schools**

While competition exists, the Czech school system generally fosters a stronger sense of social cohesion compared to the highly competitive environment in South Korea. This sense of community can be leveraged in dance education by creating a supportive and encouraging atmosphere where students feel comfortable taking risks and exploring their artistic potential.

### **Limited Exposure to Diversity**

Similar to the South Korean system, the Czech education system might have limitations in exposing students to diverse backgrounds. This could potentially limit their understanding and appreciation of different dance styles and cultural expressions. Dance education can play a vital role in addressing this limitation by incorporating diverse forms of dance into the curriculum and fostering intercultural awareness.

### **Impact on Dance Education**

The social aspects of the Czech schooling system offer a more encouraging environment for dance education compared to the South Korean system. The emphasis on collaboration, individual expression, and social cohesion aligns well with the core values of dance education. However, the potential lack of exposure to diversity remains a challenge that dance education can actively address.

By understanding these social dynamics, dance educators in the Czech Republic can tailor their practices to further encourage collaboration, individual expression, and intercultural understanding within their programs. This, in turn, can foster a thriving environment for dance education that nurtures creativity and artistic growth in students.

## ***2. 2. List of Dance Conservatories***

### **2. 2. 1. Dance Conservatories in Republic of Korea**

Chungnam Arts High School(충남예술고등학교): Grade 10 to 12  
Goyang Arts High School(고양예술고등학교): Grade 10 to 12  
Gyeongbuk Arts High School(경북예술고등학교): Grade 10 to 12  
Yewon Arts School (예원예술학교): Grade 7 to 9  
Seoul Arts High School (서울예술고등학교): Grade 10 to 12  
Sunhwa Arts Middle School (선화예술중학교): Grade 7 to 9  
Sunhwa Arts High School (선화예술고등학교): Grade 10 to 12  
Kaywon Middle School of Arts (계원예술중학교): Grade 7 to 9  
Kaywon High School of Arts (계원예술고등학교): Grade 10 to 12

### **2.2.2 Dance Conservatories in the Czech Republic**

Dance Conservatory of Prague (Tanční konzervatoř hlavního města Prahy): Grade  
Taneční centrum Praha - konzervatoř z.ú.  
Pražská taneční konzervatoř a střední odborná škola,s.r.o.  
Duncan Centre Conservatory (Duncan Centre Konzervatoř): Grade  
Brno Dance Conservatory (Taneční konzervatoř Brno): Grade  
Dance Conservatory of Ostrava (Janáčkova konzervatoř v Ostravě): Grade

## ***2.3. History of Dance Conservatories***

### **2.3.1 History of Dance Conservatories in the Republic of Korea**

#### **<sup>9</sup>Chungnam Arts High School (충남예술고등학교):**

Chungnam Arts High School is known for its interdisciplinary approach to dance education, integrating aspects of music, theater, and visual arts into its curriculum. The school emphasizes collaborative projects and cross-disciplinary performances, providing students with a holistic arts education experience. Additionally, it offers workshops and masterclasses with renowned artists to enhance students' skills and exposure to diverse artistic practices.

#### **<sup>10</sup>Goyang High School Of Arts(고양예술고등학교):**

Goyang Arts High School stands out for its strong focus on performance training and stagecraft. The school's state-of-the-art facilities, including dedicated dance studios and performance venues, support students in honing their technical proficiency and stage presence. Students also have opportunities to participate in national and international dance competitions, showcasing their talents on a competitive platform.

#### **<sup>11</sup>Gyeongbuk Arts High School (경북예술고등학교):**

Gyeongbuk Arts High School places a significant emphasis on cultural heritage and traditional dance forms. The school's curriculum includes in-depth studies of Korean traditional dance techniques, costumes, and music, preserving and promoting the country's rich cultural legacy. Students engage in performances that highlight both classical and contemporary interpretations of traditional dance, fostering a deeper appreciation for Korea's artistic traditions.

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<sup>9</sup>Chungnam Arts High School. The Introduction of Department, [no date]. [online].. Available from: <http://cna.caehs.kr/sub/info.do?m=020301&s=can>[Accessed 13 April 2024]

<sup>10</sup>Goyang High School Of Arts. Department Introduction, 2016b . [online]. Available from: <http://goarts.hs.kr/?act=doc&mcode=181110>[Accessed 13 April 2024]

<sup>11</sup>Gyeongbuk Arts High School. Introduction to dance department, 2022b. [online]. Available from: <https://gahs.dge.hs.kr/gahsh/cm/cntnts/cntntsView.do?mi=10042830&cntntsId=10042830> [Accessed 13 April 2024].

**<sup>12</sup>Yewon Arts School (예원예술학교):**

Yewon Arts School is distinguished by its focus on nurturing young talents and fostering creativity in dance. The school encourages students to explore their artistic identities and develop unique choreographic expressions. Through workshops, improvisation sessions, and collaborative projects, students at Yewon Arts School gain confidence in their artistic voice and contribute to the vibrant cultural landscape of dance.

**<sup>13</sup>Seoul Arts High School (서울예술고등학교):**

Seoul Arts High School offers a comprehensive dance program that encompasses technical training, artistic exploration, and career development. The school's partnerships with professional dance companies and guest artists provide students with exposure to industry practices and networking opportunities. Additionally, the school prioritizes dance research and scholarly activities, encouraging students to engage critically with dance as an academic discipline.

**<sup>14</sup>Sunhwa Arts Middle School (선화예술중학교) & Sunhwa Arts High School (선화예술고등학교):**

Sunhwa Arts School fosters a supportive and nurturing environment for students to explore their potential in dance. The schools' faculty members, comprising experienced dance educators and practicing artists, provide personalized guidance and mentorship to students. The curriculum includes performance workshops, choreography labs, and interdisciplinary projects, fostering a well-rounded education in dance and the arts.

**<sup>15</sup>Kaywon Middle School of Arts (계원예술중학교) & Kaywon High School of Arts (계원예술고등학교):**

Kaywon School of Arts is known for its innovative approach to dance education, incorporating technology and multimedia into dance productions. The schools' dance studios are equipped with audiovisual resources and digital platforms for creative experimentation and performance

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<sup>12</sup>Yewon school. History, 2012. [online]. Available from: <https://yewon.sen.ms.kr/139410/subMenu.do> [Accessed 13 April 2024].

<sup>13</sup>Seoul Arts High School. History, 2019. [online]. Available from: <https://yego.sen.hs.kr/13603/subMenu.do> [Accessed 26 April 2024].

<sup>14</sup>Sunhwa art middle school, History, 2022. [online]. Available from: <https://sunhwaarts.sen.ms.kr/137304/subMenu.do> [Accessed 26 April 2024].

<sup>15</sup>Kaywon high school. History, 2020. [online]. Available from: <http://kaywon.hs.kr/?act=doc&mcode=1019> [Accessed 26 April 2024].

documentation. Students at Kaywon School of Arts develop skills in dance production, multimedia integration, and audience engagement, preparing them for contemporary dance practices in the digital age.

### **2.3.2 History of Dance Conservatories in the Czech Republic**

#### **Dance Conservatory of Prague (Tanční konzervatoř hlavního města Prahy):**

The Dance Conservatory of Prague is known for its strong emphasis on classical ballet training, with a curriculum that encompasses classical repertoire, technique classes, and variations. The conservatory's faculty includes experienced ballet masters and guest teachers from renowned ballet companies, providing students with a professional training environment. Additionally, the conservatory collaborates with theaters and dance companies in Prague, offering performance opportunities and exposure to the Czech dance scene.

#### **Taneční centrum Praha - konzervatoř z.ú.:**

Taneční centrum Praha is characterized by its contemporary dance focus, offering a curriculum that explores diverse movement styles, improvisation techniques, and choreographic experimentation. The conservatory's faculty comprises acclaimed contemporary dance artists and choreographers, fostering a dynamic and innovative learning environment. Students at Taneční centrum Praha engage in collaborative projects, site-specific performances, and interdisciplinary explorations, pushing the boundaries of contemporary dance practice.

#### **Pražská taneční konzervatoř a střední odborná škola, s.r.o.:**

The Pražská taneční konzervatoř combines traditional dance training with modern pedagogical approaches, offering a balanced curriculum that includes classical ballet, modern dance techniques, and dance history studies. The conservatory's facilities include well-equipped dance studios, a dance library, and multimedia resources for research and creative projects. Students benefit from individualized coaching, performance opportunities in Prague's cultural venues, and collaborations with international dance institutions.

**Duncan Centre Conservatory (Duncan Centre Konzervatoř):**

The Duncan Centre Conservatory is distinguished by its focus on Isadora Duncan's expressive dance principles, emphasizing freedom of movement, emotional authenticity, and connection to music and nature. The conservatory's curriculum integrates Duncan's techniques with contemporary dance practices, encouraging students to explore their artistic identities and develop personal movement vocabularies. Students at Duncan Centre engage in performance workshops, site-specific dance projects, and community outreach programs inspired by Duncan's philosophy.

**Brno Dance Conservatory (Taneční konzervatoř Brno):**

The Brno Dance Conservatory is known for its comprehensive dance education program, offering training in classical ballet, modern dance, jazz dance, and choreography. The conservatory's faculty includes distinguished dance educators and choreographers, providing students with diverse perspectives and mentoring in various dance styles. Students at Taneční konzervatoř Brno have opportunities to collaborate with Brno's cultural institutions, participate in dance festivals, and showcase their talents in professional settings.

**Dance Conservatory of Ostrava (Janáčkova konzervatoř v Ostravě):**

The Dance Conservatory of Ostrava is recognized for its strong focus on interdisciplinary arts education, combining dance training with music, theater, and visual arts studies. The conservatory's curriculum includes classical ballet, contemporary dance techniques, choreography workshops, and performance projects in collaboration with Ostrava's cultural institutions. Students benefit from a supportive learning environment, personalized mentorship, and opportunities to participate in international dance exchanges and residencies.

### ***3. Focused Analysis of Specific Dance Conservatories : An In-Depth Exploration***

#### ***3.1. Goyang High School Of Arts***

In this chapter, we delve into the distinctive features and educational methods of Goyang Arts High School, focusing on its impact on students' artistic development and personal growth. Goyang Arts High School, located in South Korea, stands out for its holistic approach to cultivating leadership talents in the field of dance, emphasizing adaptability to global cultures, creativity, and a blend of classical and modern dance principle.

At Goyang Arts High School, the curriculum revolves around four core teaching elements. Firstly, there's a strong emphasis on strengthening dance expertise through systematic practical training, ensuring that students develop robust dance skills. Secondly, the school boasts excellent instruction, provided by highly skilled instructors who offer personalized training tailored to individual students' levels. Thirdly, continuous improvement is fostered through various special lectures designed to hone practical skills further. Lastly, students gain valuable stage experience through participation in dance recitals and competitions, offering them extensive exposure to performing on stage at least once a year.

To gain deeper insights into the school's approach, I conducted a survey and <sup>16</sup>interview with a graduate of Goyang Arts High School, referred to as Graduate Y, who completed her studies in 2004. Graduate Y pursued a major in ballet and minors in modern/contemporary dance and Korean dance during her time at the school. Her weekly schedule included 8 hours of ballet classes (her major) and 3 hours each of modern/contemporary dance and Korean dance (her minors). Additionally, theory classes covered dance appreciation, criticism, understanding, and choreography/creative writing, offering a well-rounded education.

One notable aspect of Goyang Arts High School is its after-school courses, although optional, they are widely attended by students. Graduate Y participated in 17 hours of group lessons and 4 hours of individual lessons weekly for her major, ballet, through this program. The school's emphasis on

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<sup>16</sup> From an informal interview with Ms.Y, in Seoul, on (21 March 2024).

equality and basic skill development, along with character education, fosters a conducive learning environment.

The school's curriculum structure, divided into bar, center, and work segments, ensures a comprehensive learning experience focusing on basics, techniques, and creative expression. Despite occasional challenges with the level of difficulty and time constraints, the school's practical evaluation system, including feedback from university professors, significantly impacts students' university admissions and artistic growth.

Compared to private academies, Goyang Arts High School offers a diverse teaching staff and ample practical class time, integrating curriculum and practical training seamlessly. The injection-based education approach resonated well with Graduate Y, contributing positively to her personal and artistic development.

Graduate Y's overall satisfaction with Goyang Arts High School stands at 75%, citing improvements needed in balancing practical skills with personal management to address potential issues such as injuries and academic challenges.

This analysis sheds light on Goyang Arts High School's unique educational model, highlighting its strengths and areas for enhancement in nurturing aspiring dancers and leaders in the dance community.

### ***3. 2. Kyungbuk Arts High School***

In this section, we explore the insights provided by former student <sup>17</sup>"K," who completed her studies in Kyungbuk Arts High School in 2019, focusing on the school's educational philosophy and impact on students' growth as artists.

Kyungbuk Arts High School prioritizes individual movement and the pursuit of personal style as essential components of its educational philosophy. "K" highlights the unique feature of the school's after-school system, where additional classes are predominantly conducted at private academies, comprising 40% school-based and 60% academy-based training, divided into 3-4 groups.

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<sup>17</sup> From an informal interview with Ms.K, in Seoul, on (23 March 2024).

The teaching style and philosophy at Kyungbuk Arts High School are centered around instilling fundamental skills, stage manners, and conceptual understanding through practical works. Former students like "K" recall the emphasis on basic skills, survival strategies as dancers, and the importance of body care and communication through movement.

Detailed choreography and creative writing classes are integral to the full-time teachers' approach, focusing on artistic expression, emotional depth, and technical precision. Pre-practice sessions and exposure to dance culture from an early age contribute positively to students' adaptability to college and broaden their perspective on dance.

The school's class structure includes daily major sessions, biweekly minor classes, and weekly creative writing sessions, providing a balanced curriculum. "K" acknowledges personal growth and easier transition to college due to the school's structured approach and ample time devoted to dance education.

Kyungbuk Arts High School's positive impact on personal and artistic growth is evident in "K's" experience, citing improved thinking and writing skills based on movement, adherence to basics, and self-teaching strategies encouraged by teachers.

The school's systematic class structure, emphasis on growth through competition, communication skills, and group dynamics contribute to a holistic educational experience. "K" aligns with the school's goals, particularly regarding university preparation.

Regarding body management and support, the school offers classes on conditioning, taping techniques, and personalized feedback during auditions, ensuring students' overall well-being and balanced development.

In conclusion, Kyungbuk Arts High School's comprehensive approach to dance education, coupled with personalized guidance and emphasis on fundamental skills, fosters a conducive environment for students' personal growth, preparing them for future endeavors in the dance industry.

### ***3.3. Chungnam Arts High School***

Former student <sup>18</sup>"M" from Chungnam Arts High School who graduated in 2020, reflects on the school's educational philosophy and unique aspects of its teaching approach. The school's pursuit of personalized care was noted, particularly when students had close relationships with full-time teachers. Despite some challenges, such as the assignment of teachers not majoring in certain disciplines, the school's commitment to providing quality education stands out.

Chungnam Arts High School's distinctiveness lies in its affordability compared to arts high schools in Seoul, thanks to government support. The close-knit environment, akin to a family, emphasizes the importance of maintaining good relationships with full-time teachers for proper guidance and support.

The teaching styles and philosophies varied among full-time teachers, with a focus on essential skills and techniques during the college entrance exam preparation in the third grade (last grade before graduating the high school). Emphasis was placed on physical well-being, avoiding injuries, and preparing students for college life and beyond.

Full-time teachers aimed to create a comfortable and enjoyable class atmosphere while prioritizing students' physical appearance and readiness for college. The transition from academies to art high schools brought a sense of reality regarding college expectations and rigorous training.

The school's timetable included extensive hours of practical skills training in the third grade, with specific classes like choreography focusing on developing students' unique styles. However, the demanding schedule left little room for personal growth or hobbies outside of dance.

After-school classes, held at the academy, extended into the evening, highlighting the commitment and dedication required for dance education. Despite positive evaluations of the school's teaching methods, concerns were raised about potential side effects, such as excessive focus on weight loss diets during students' growth phases.

Overall, Chungnam Arts High School's dedication to providing quality education, affordability, and rigorous training regimen shapes students into skilled dancers while also presenting challenges and areas for improvement.

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<sup>18</sup> From an informal interview with Ms.M, in Seoul, on (25 March 2024).

### ***3.4. Evaluation***

*In* evaluating the Korean art high schools, it becomes evident that while they excel in certain areas, there are notable shortcomings and side effects that warrant consideration. The primary focus on university admissions, particularly for prestigious institutions, has led to a system where schools prioritize preparation for college entrance exams over holistic artistic development. This emphasis on exam results often results in teachers dedicating significant efforts to technical aspects related to these exams, sometimes at the expense of fundamental skills necessary for a dancer or artist.

One of the notable side effects observed in these high-pressure environments is the prevalence of mental health issues among students. The intense competition fosters an atmosphere of rivalry rather than collaboration, leading to jealousy, school violence, and psychological problems such as eating disorders, depression, and panic disorders. These issues can persist even after students graduate, indicating a deeper-rooted problem within the system.

Another area of concern is the limited focus on choreography classes. With only around one and a half hours per week dedicated to choreography in some cases, students struggle to develop their creativity and choreography skills adequately. This deficiency in creative exploration can lead to difficulties in personal expression and the development of a unique movement style.

Furthermore, the rigid structure and emphasis on conforming to specific dance styles desired by universities leave little room for individuality and personal growth. Students often find themselves adapting their dance styles to match institutional preferences rather than exploring and developing their artistic identities. The lack of personalized feedback and limited leisure time due to packed schedules further hinder students' ability to grow creatively and emotionally.

Despite these challenges, there are positive aspects to attending arts high schools. The exposure to dance culture from a young age, participation in competitions, and early networking opportunities can broaden students' perspectives and provide valuable experiences. Additionally, the diverse teaching styles and access to private lessons offer avenues for individual growth and adaptation, aiding in a smoother transition to college and professional dance careers.

In conclusion, while Korean art high schools offer valuable opportunities for young dancers, there is a need for a more balanced approach that prioritizes artistic development, mental well-being, and individual creativity alongside academic achievements.

### **3.5. Dance Conservatory *Hl. the city of Prague***

<sup>19</sup>The Dance Conservatory of the Capital City of Prague is an eight-year selective school focused on educating professional dancers. It offers secondary professional education in classical, modern, and folk dance, culminating in either a high school diploma or a graduation certificate for higher professional education. Graduates are equipped for artistic and artistic pedagogic activities, enabling them to apply as performing artists in ballet ensembles of theaters or other professional dance ensembles. Additionally, they can pursue further studies at a university in the humanities field.

The curriculum at the Dance Conservatory of Prague is designed to provide comprehensive training in classical, modern, and folk dance, supplemented by general and theoretical professional education. Students engage in practical vocational training alongside compulsory school attendance during the first four years of study. Admission to the conservatory has been open to students who have completed the 5th grade of elementary school since the 1996/97 academic year.

As part of the educational experience, students learn about the historical development and current trends in dance and ballet, music, and other related artistic disciplines. They also gain knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology to prevent health risks associated with dance practice. Creative imagination, expressive techniques, and professional ethics are integral aspects of their training, preparing them for professional performances and collaborative work.

Moreover, graduates of the Dance Conservatory of Prague develop competencies beyond artistic skills. They acquire language competence for communication in foreign language environments, enhance their social and personnel competence for effective teamwork and interpersonal relationships, and cultivate civic and cultural awareness. Their education emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning, adaptability to changing work environments, and responsible citizenship, aligning with values of democratic societies and sustainable development.

The conservatory's approach to education also addresses the needs of students with special educational requirements. It provides tailored teaching methods and support for pupils with specific developmental learning disabilities, speech impediments, social disadvantages, and exceptionally gifted students. This inclusive approach fosters a conducive learning environment and encourages personal and professional growth among all students.

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<sup>19</sup> VACEK, Premysl M., [no date]. Taneční Konzervatoř Hl. M. Prahy - Školní Vzdělávací Program. [online]. Available from: <https://www.tkpraha.cz/pro-uchazece/19-skolni-vzdelavaci-program.html> [Accessed 15 April 2024].

The Dance Conservatory of Prague ensures that graduates are proficient in using information and communication technologies, managing occupational safety and health, and promoting quality, economic efficiency, and sustainability in their professional activities. These comprehensive competencies equip graduates with the skills and mindset necessary for successful careers in the dance industry while contributing positively to society and the arts community.

<sup>20</sup>Interviewed "V" and "K" from Dance Conservatory Hl. in Prague, graduating in 2025, provided insightful perspectives on their education at the conservatory. They detailed their weekly class hours, with "V" mentioning 14 hours of ballet, 9 hours of modern dance, and 4 hours of folk dance, while "K" outlined 20-25 hours of ballet, 4 hours of modern and contemporary dance, and 2 hours of folk dance per week. The theoretical curriculum included languages, psychology, philosophy, and various dance methodologies, offering a comprehensive academic foundation.

Regarding choreography and creative writing classes, "V" highlighted collaborative modern choreography creation with professors and personal choreographic endeavors, while "K" mentioned occasional creativity exercises guided by teachers, emphasizing practical application and structured learning experiences. Extracurricular classes, particularly in classical and modern dance, provided additional training outside regular conservatory hours, enhancing technical proficiency and artistic development.

The teaching styles varied, with "V" noting a more open and trusting relationship with modern dance professors compared to ballet instructors, who were occasionally perceived as rigid. "K" expressed appreciation for teachers' individualized approaches based on students' personalities and capabilities, emphasizing the importance of mentorship and guidance in dance education.

The educational approach at the conservatory was examined, with "V" questioning the emphasis on classical dance over modern dance and suggesting the need for innovation and alignment with contemporary dance trends. "K" acknowledged the school's strengths in discipline and hard work but advocated for modernizing methodologies and embracing current dance practices for a more dynamic learning environment.

Both students recognized personal growth and resilience fostered by the conservatory's rigorous training, although "V" expressed a desire for more opportunities for self-expression and exploration beyond traditional dance forms. "K" appreciated the sense of community among students but indicated a need for change and evolution in the school's educational framework to remain relevant and competitive in the dance industry.

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<sup>20</sup>From an informal interview with Ms.V and Ms.K, in Prague, on (8 March 2024).

In conclusion, the interview with "V" and "K" provided valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement at Dance Conservatory HL., highlighting the complex dynamics of dance education, teaching philosophies, and student aspirations within a traditional yet evolving academic setting.

### ***3. 6. Duncan Center Conservatory***

<sup>21</sup>The Duncan Centre Conservatory in Prague offers a comprehensive study program in contemporary dance, preparing students for versatile careers in the dance industry. The curriculum includes employment opportunities for graduates, subjects in individual grades, and detailed information on their concept, content, and aims.

<sup>22</sup>For example, the Duncan dance technique (DTT) is a key focus, with students in the third year allocated six hours per week to master various aspects of dance. The expected outcomes of education encompass a deep understanding of the body's structure and functional anatomy, command of movement control in place and through space, empathy in interpersonal dynamics, proficiency in dance partnering, conscious utilization of space, dynamics, and time, and integration of musicality into movement.

<sup>23</sup>The curriculum is organized into thematic units such as control and continuity of movements, coordination and succession of body centers of gravity, mutual relations in partnerships and group work, and the musical component of movement. Students engage in precise musical and movement phrasing, exploring concepts like spread of movement, turning, rotation, spirals, and working in various group sizes.

The conservatory prepares students for diverse professional careers as dance interpreters, choreographers, or dance teachers. Upon completing the six-year program, students receive the degree

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<sup>21</sup>DUNCANCENTRE.CZ. Study. *duncancentre.cz* [online]. Available from: <https://www.duncancentre.cz/en/study/> [Accessed 13 April 2024].

<sup>22</sup>DUNCANCENTRE.CZ. Study. *duncancentre.cz* [online]. Available from: <https://www.duncancentre.cz/en/study/> [Accessed 13 April 2024].

<sup>23</sup>DUNCANCENTRE.CZ. Současný tanec/Contemporary Dance. *duncancentre.cz* [online]. Available from: <https://www.duncancentre.cz/studium/soucasny-tanec/> [Accessed 13 April 2024].

DiS (Certified Specialist). The first four years constitute upper secondary education, culminating in the maturita (A-level) exam, while the final two years are post-secondary.

Moreover, the Duncan Centre Conservatory holds an Erasmus+ Charter, facilitating collaboration with universities at the bachelor's level and enhancing opportunities for international exchange and learning in the field of contemporary dance

### ***3.7. Evaluation***

The educational approach at Czech dance conservatories, particularly Dance Conservatory Hl. in Prague, demonstrates a distinct contrast between classical and modern dance training methodologies. Classical dance classes are characterized by strict adherence to professors' requirements, reflecting a structured and disciplined approach. In contrast, modern dance classes adopt a more exploratory and advisory style, fostering creativity and individual expression within a friendly learning environment. However, feedback from students reveals concerns regarding the educational approach's emphasis on classical dance, limiting artistic freedom and innovation. Even students specializing in modern dance note an imbalance, with more hours allocated to classical dance than modern dance classes. The absence of opportunities for external experiences, such as exchange programs, further restricts students' exposure to diverse dance practices and global trends.

In a practical demonstration of these limitations, students' participation in external projects outside the conservatory setting elicited enthusiasm and satisfaction, highlighting a desire for greater freedom and creative exploration beyond traditional curriculum boundaries. The students' eagerness for updated methodologies, curriculum enhancements, and exposure to contemporary dance trends underscores the need for innovation and adaptation within conservatory education.

Despite these challenges, the rigorous discipline enforced by the conservatories contributes positively to students' personal and artistic growth. The structured environment fosters resilience, discipline, and foundational skills in physicality, musicality, and basic dance techniques. However, there is a recognized need for evolution to meet the evolving demands of the dance industry and nurture students' holistic development.

Students' thirst for new information, methodologies, and styles reflects a desire for a dynamic learning environment that integrates contemporary dance practices and encourages exploration. Incorporating more exchanges, workshops, and renovation initiatives can bridge the gap between traditional pedagogy and current dance trends, offering students a more comprehensive and relevant educational experience.

In conclusion, while the conservatories' discipline instills valuable attributes in students, there is a compelling case for curriculum modernization, methodological updates, and greater flexibility to cultivate a vibrant and forward-thinking dance education ecosystem responsive to students' evolving needs and aspirations.

#### ***4. Comparison Between Korean Arts High School and Czech Dance Conservatories***

The evaluation of Korean arts high schools and Czech dance conservatories reveals contrasting strengths and weaknesses, providing insights into the different educational approaches and challenges faced by students in each system.

In Korean arts high schools, the emphasis on university admissions and exam preparation is evident, leading to a system where academic achievements often overshadow holistic artistic development. This results in a competitive environment that fosters mental health issues, including eating disorders, depression, and panic disorders. Additionally, limited focus on choreography classes and the pressure to conform to specific dance styles desired by universities hinder students' creativity and individuality. However, exposure to dance culture, participation in competitions, and diverse teaching styles offer valuable experiences and networking opportunities for students.

On the other hand, Czech dance conservatories, such as Dance Conservatory HI. in Prague, showcase a structured yet diverse educational approach. Classical dance classes emphasize discipline and adherence to professors' requirements, while modern dance classes encourage creativity and individual expression in a friendly atmosphere. Despite concerns about the imbalance in curriculum emphasis and limited external experiences like exchange programs, the conservatories' rigorous discipline contributes positively to students' personal and artistic growth.

The comparison between the two systems highlights the need for a balanced approach that prioritizes artistic development, mental well-being, and individual creativity alongside academic achievements. While Korean arts high schools offer exposure to dance culture and networking opportunities, there is a pressing need for greater emphasis on holistic development and creative exploration. Conversely, Czech dance conservatories benefit from a structured environment but require curriculum modernization, methodological updates, and increased flexibility to integrate contemporary dance practices and meet students' evolving needs effectively. Incorporating more exchanges, workshops, and renovation initiatives can bridge these gaps and create a vibrant and forward-thinking dance education ecosystem responsive to students' aspirations.

## Conclusion

As I delve into the comparison between Korean arts high schools and Czech dance conservatories, I am struck by the rich tapestry of strengths and areas for growth within each system. The Korean arts high schools shine in their academic rigor and the vibrant exposure they provide to dance culture and networking opportunities. However, they grapple with challenges such as mental health issues, a limited focus on choreography, and the pressure to conform to institutional standards.

On the flip side, Czech dance conservatories offer a structured yet disciplined environment that fosters personal and artistic growth through rigorous training. Yet, they fall short in modernizing their curriculum and providing external experiences that could enrich students' learning journeys.

Reflecting on these insights, I am drawn to a compelling conclusion: the urgent need for a balanced and dynamic dance education approach. This entails integrating academic excellence with holistic artistic development, prioritizing mental well-being, and nurturing creativity and exploration.

Imagine a world where Korean arts high schools prioritize mental health support, encourage more creative choreography, and celebrate individuality alongside academic achievements. Similarly, Czech dance conservatories could revamp their curricula, introduce more external experiences like exchanges and workshops, and embrace contemporary dance practices to remain relevant and inspiring.

Ultimately, this thesis echoes the transformative power of dance education. It's about empowering students to grow holistically, express themselves artistically, and adapt to the ever-evolving landscape of the dance industry. Through innovation, a supportive environment, and a focus on nurturing students' unique talents, dance education becomes a catalyst for the next generation of dancers and artists to thrive in a vibrant and diverse global community.

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