

5. ARTISTIC EXPRESSIVENESS - EXHAUSTIVE COMPONENT IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS FOR “DANCE” SPECIALTY STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The given paper elucidates one of the main professional skills of a dancer / performer - artistic expressiveness. Following the analysis of several studies in the field of choreographic art dedicated to expressiveness and methods of its development in choreographic creation, the concept of expressiveness is revealed by defining it in different types of art, cultural studies, philosophy, etc. The most complex description of the component of artistic expressiveness is present in classical, folk and modern dance, where the conditions of its formation and development are exposed in the practical classes of classical, folk and modern dance. The stated issue was researched in a study was conducted over three years of university studies at cycle I (Bachelor).*

Key words: *expressiveness, choreographic art, classical dance, folk dance, modern dance*

1. Introduction

It is known that *expressiveness* is one of the defining characteristics for all genres of art, whether spatial, temporal or spatio-temporal. The concept of *expressiveness* is approached in a unique way by each type of individual art, both philosophically and culturally or historically, being an important topic of artistic and figurative reflection. According to the Art Dictionary, *expressiveness* is a characteristic of the work of art that refers to the vivid, clear, eloquent, suggestive way, in which the “information” of plastic, emotional and ideational nature, its meaning and the “message” of the creator are highlighted. In principle, *expressiveness* is implicit and indispensable to any work of art; there are, however, styles, currents and artists in whose works *expressiveness* acquires a programmatic character, aiming to accentuate in intensity the language of forms, but, in parallel, also of the inner experience that constitutes the life substance of the work¹. *Artistic expressiveness* is one of the characteristics of body language in choreographic art, being a form of conscious communication (through gestures) and / or unconscious (through expression rendered at the level of mimicry and body posture). The movements, which represent a complex mechanism that plays an important role in the development of coordination, conditioning motor learning, are at the basis of body language.

Several researchers and representatives of the choreographic art both from the country and from abroad have permanently been preoccupied by the study of the expressiveness of the performer / dancer in the choreographic art. In this sense, an essential place in the analysis of the dancer’s body language had Gigi Căciuleanu

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in the essay of chromo-analysis applied to the dancing body *Wind, Volume, Vectors* (2008), Rudolf von Laban, the famous inventor of the scoring and analysis system of *Labanotation* movement, also Doris Humphrey, author of the best known and studied book on dance *The Art of Making Dances* (1991) and Susan Foster, who wrote *Corporealities* (1996) and *Worlding Dance* (2009). According to the Russian theorist V. G. Vlasov, *expressiveness* is “[...] a qualitative degree (level) of the perception of the image idea. Artistic expressiveness is present in artistic creation, which to a certain extent is achieved through specific means of conveying expression, similar to a statement”². Artistic expressiveness in choreographic art, in the opinion of P.E. Dolguşin, is in an interrelation with the development of personality: “Dance is a means of expressing emotions, kinetic energy, associative movements, spiritual experience, rhythmic inductions, where all these components are nothing but trends, stylistics, aesthetics and the sense of time”³.

Depending on the diversity of species and genres of art, *expressiveness* manifests itself in various ways. In music, choreography, painting, sculpture and literature, it has the most consistent share of artistic and figurative reflection. In choreographic culture, in the field of all dance genres, whether folk, classical, sports or modern, the concept of *expressiveness* is used, where dancers / performers are assigned the characteristic: *expressive dancer*, *expressive interpretation*. In choreographic art, *expressiveness* is considered a natural aspect, obviously, which does not require any specific analysis or training. But, despite all opinions, like any other skill, *expressiveness* must and can be developed in the learning process. The training and acquisition of specific skills - artistic values, including *artistic expressiveness*, by the student - future dance teacher - is the goal of the graduate of the first cycle of the specialty “Dance”, who aspires to integrate effectively in the field of choreography and in today’s society in accordance with the new requirements. The training of practical skills of dance (classical, folk, modern) and the acquisition of artistic skills, obtained by studying the disciplines “Folk Dance”, “Classical Dance”, “Modern Dance”, are meant to streamline the work of dance teachers, in order to achieve and obtain considerable results in the professional activity.

Acquiring artistic skills for dance genres - classical, folk, modern, is specific to the educational process that was the basis for the training of dance teachers. The artistic skills involve: development of the capacity to receive and understand artistic languages; development and cultivation of creative imagination; nurturing artistic sensitivity and creativity; education and cultivation of rhythmicity and musicality (artistic skills that require the existence of a rhythm, a tempo or measure of dance); development of expressiveness, gestural communication, nonverbal communication - which complete the psycho-pedagogical components of dance; education of body aesthetics and motor aesthetics; formation and development of a multidirectional and open aesthetic culture; cultivation of the attitude of rejection and isolation of non-values, cultivating good taste; appreciation of true values: ethical, cultural, moral, spiritual; formation and improvement of moral-volitional qualities; formation of autonomous and responsible valorization capacities;

appreciation and enhancement of the national and international aesthetic heritage; development of sensitivity for authentic aesthetic motor culture; developing interest in choreographic composition and interpretation; training of the ability to know dance theoretically and methodically, and its significance; assimilation of the possibility to perform the dance choreography at a high artistic and technical level; development of the individual habit of living in harmony with others, socializing and empathizing.

All these skills allowed us to highlight experimentally, both the aspect of artistic values of the dance teacher profession and the *artistic expressiveness* of a performer, as the student in the specialty “Dance” is evaluated from a practical and theoretical point of view. In theatrical art, *expressiveness* is defined as “the capability and skill of an actor to express, as accurately and concisely as possible, the character and image of the character through movement, gesture and facial expressions, according to the era, style, genre characteristics of the play and not lastly through the intention of the actor and the director. We cannot talk about the body in dance without talking about language. If a person cannot name a sequence of rhythmic movements as a dance, then it turns out that we are not dealing with a dance, but only with a feature of gymnastic or everyday movements. The body in dance becomes the effect of the discourse organized by teachers, choreographers, critics and analysts of the movement. Thus, a language appears that captures the dancer’s body that represents and reconstitutes it. Learning the language of dance involves developing awareness, with clarity and precision, of different movements, both as a technique and as emotional-interpretive involvement, and establishing the distribution of effort needed to achieve optimal movements.

2. Discussions

A person cannot acquire particularities of individuality and talent through studies because they are innate, but their development and evolution is possible. These abilities are set in the objectives of the curricula of the disciplines: *Classical Dance*, *Folk Dance* and *Modern Dance*. Both individuality and talent cannot be subjected to the teaching-learning process, but they can be exposed to development. This problem is solved by classical, folk and modern dance teachers from the “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University, *Dance* specialty. In addition to the fact that the student is required to master the perfect technique, gesture, facial expressions, musicality and much more, he also needs to develop creativity, memory, imagination, attention and to enrich his body language. It is absolutely necessary and useful to pay special attention to the development of the component of *artistic expressiveness* in the teaching-learning process of students (future dance teachers) at the early stage, i.e. in the first year of studies in cycle I. It contributes to educating virtuosity, elegance, creativity, aesthetics, plasticity and expressiveness of movements, combined at the same time with rhythm and emotional-motor message, all expressed based on the perception of the means of expressiveness of the combinations of classical, folk or modern dance.

According to the theoretical concept of the research, the artistic activity is realized / can be realized at the level of the artistic perception of the choreographic

work, at the level of assimilation and interpretation of the choreographic work, at the level of creation and staging of one's own choreographic work. It should be mentioned that the artistic training of students-future dance teachers was systematically carried out in the disciplines: *Classical Dance, Folk Dance, Modern Dance* through: repeating sequences of expressiveness several times; executions of transposition in the role, interpretation of the character; mime and pantomime exercises; exercises of plastic expression on a melodic line; respecting the rhythm, identifying it; exercises with plastic and abstract elements from classical, folk and modern dance; artistic communication exercises with the dance partner and with those in the class / ensemble; communication with the public, transmitting the message, the state created in the dance, inciting the spectator in the dance story; musical combinations and structures, in different tempos, their identification.

Therefore, the interpretation (execution) of the choreographic work or a dance combination is possible by having an optimal level of artistic training. During the three years of study in the first cycle, specifically artistic tests were applied to the students – future dance teachers, in the process of choreographic training, and namely: 1. Musical tempo; 2. Sense of Rhythm; 3. Torso mobility; 4. Dance Fragments. The competence formative experiment was performed in the research group on a sample of 13 students. The research technique used was *before-and-after*, in order to observe more clearly the dynamics of changes in the manifestation of artistic values in students of the choreographic specialty.

During the evaluation of the effectiveness of the methodology for forming artistic values in students in the choreographic training process, the statistical data recorded by the research group during the three years of studies in the first cycle (Bachelor's degree) were analyzed. The interpretation of the statistical data allowed the comparison of the indices related to the significance of the difference between the initial and final tests at the level of the first year of studies, and subsequently the students of the research group were tested at the end of the second and third year. The same tests were given, at the beginning of the 1st year -initial testing (2016→2018), at the end of the 2nd year of undergraduate study to observe the progress made. The artistic test consisted of:

1. Musical tempo - the speed at which the respective melodies unfold. Stepping to the rhythm of music, piano chords and melodies of various unknown tempos. The following were assessed: the identification of the tempo (slow, medium, fast, very fast), the artistic gait, the presence and stage appearance, the attitude, the confidence, and the performance of the competitor; the way of stepping identifies the musical tempo.

2. Sense of rhythm_- rhythm overlaps, its identification. (*Rhythm is the primary element of movement. All human motor activity is governed by rhythm. Rhythm in music is closely related to the various pitches of sounds that create the "basis of musical expression". Rhythm in music is the sequence in which accentuated loud beats and semi-accentuated beats are presented. The rhythm gives the character of the music and is the regular alternation in time of different longer or shorter sounds*). TEST - the rhythm of a complicated musical composition rendered by

clapping. The rhythm will be identified by clapping: rhythm of hora (circle dance), sarba, waltz, tango, gallop, oriental, samba, rumba, paso doble, march, mazurka, etc.

3. Torso mobility - the correct binding of the acrobatic elements used in the dance. The elements can be: leaning on a straight line back and forth, sitting pirouette with standing up, standing in balance in the *attitude* position - the amplitude of the foot back to 180°, slow reversal forward, backward. The assessment is for: the order of the acrobatic elements and their correct binding so that their combination is not felt, taking place as a long acrobatic exercise. Refined combination with dance steps. The execution technique and the artistic impression in execution are assessed. The values in points are: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10 points.

The mobility of the torso is valid only if the student does not lose his balance during the pirouette, the *attitude* position or the slow back-and-forth reverse, with the support on 1-2 hands or falling. The increased complexity of most of the bodily difficulties and of the technique of the classical-folk-modern dance genre denotes a continuous influence between the two categories of factors for the realization of the artistic motor act in a composition.

4. Fragment of Dance - The correct rendering of a set of movements of 32-64 beats, from a complex choreographic composition. Spontaneous composition of an improvised dance fragment. This test is a chain of dance steps (classical, folk or modern), highlighting different musical rhythms. This combination must last at least 8 seconds according to the tempo and rhythm of the music. The composition must express the character of the music through an emotional response coming from body movement, the movement being partial or total. The assessment constitutes 3 points. Improvisation plays a special role in educating motor musicality and creativity. On a musical piece (from classical, folk or modern dance), the group of students improvises movement structures, dance elements, which reflect the way in which they perceive the musical accompaniment and the emotional echo induced on their psychic structure.

This means of work is recommended at all stages of university training, because the development of imagination and creativity is required as a major object of training, as a whole, with the framing of both interpretive and compositional-choreographic aspects. The measurement / testing is performed individually, the following two aspects being considered: artistic expressiveness and originality of the presented movements for which the student receives from the assessor a grade from 1 to 10 points maximum; the correlation of the movements with the music for which the assessor gives a grade from 1 to 10. The final grade for this test is obtained by adding the two grades and dividing them by 2; the student receives a maximum grade of 10.00 for this test. During the research, it was observed that the reiterated repetition by the student / performer of the movement reproduced after the teacher gives a smaller assimilation effect than a single verbal (or written) description of the characteristics of the proposed movement. Thus, the greatest effect of the mastery of new movements by the student / performer is achieved when a natural demonstration of a movement is accompanied by a verbal description, explanation or comment⁴, where an

expressive gesture in all its content and importance can be equated with a word or intonation in a dramatic show, so that the connection of a gesture with a word is natural.

Another essential role that repetition has in the choreographic art of a certain movement is the acquisition of a sense of patience by the student-dancer or performer. Also, the rehearsals of the set of movements proposed by a student / performer to the other members of a group / ensemble are suitable. Through this procedure, the dance teacher highlights the expressive potential of each body (dancer / performer), capturing the interest of each student / participant, thus accurately monitoring how students reproduce the proposed movement and paying their attention to omit certain details, such as arm positions, sequence rhythm, etc. In all these stages of experimentation and research, K.S. Stanislavski's statement was equally taken into account, and namely "the gesture for the sake of gesture must not exist on the stage"⁶. It is necessary to avoid the following artistic mistakes in this test for which the following sanctions apply:

- interruption of the character and dynamism of the choreographic composition: 1 point;
- lack of character and dynamism in the choreographic composition: 5 points;
- lack of starting and ending posture in the choreographic composition: 3 points;
- lack of coordination of movements with the music of the choreographic composition: 5 points;
- lack of synchronization of movements with the rhythm of the music of the choreographic composition: 1 point.

There must be a total correlation between music and movement expressed by: contrast of movements according to the tempo, rhythm and musical accents; the ability to express the character and the emotional response of music through movements (body language). In the case of body expressiveness, this is characterized by: the synthesis of strength, beauty and elegance of the movements in the choreographic composition; participation of all moving body parts (head, shoulders, torso, hands, arms, legs); facial expression, which must convey the theme of the music and the message of the choreographic composition; continuity of movements, without unjustified interruptions or stops. The student / dancer must avoid the following artistic mistakes for body expressiveness:

- isolated segmental movements of the dance steps: 1 point;
- absence, for the most part, of facial and body expression: 3 points;
- total absence of body and facial expressiveness (segmental movements): 5 points¹¹.

3. Results

We specify that in the Republic of Moldova the student's grading is done by giving grades (digits). The grading represents the decision act assumed by the teacher within the didactic evaluation activity, after the integral accomplishment of the actions of quantitative measurement and of qualitative appreciation of the degree and of the way in which the student achieves the curricular objectives. In the Higher Education System of the Republic of Moldova, the grading scale from

1 to 10 is applied. The minimum passing grade is 5. Other qualifications can also be applied: “passed” and “failed”⁷. It is observed in Table 1 that the values obtained for each artistic test separately by students-future dance teachers from the initial test (1st year), to the final test (2nd year), measured with the same unit, respectively grades (1; 2; 3; ...; 10), increased constantly - reaching in the end almost the maximum value, which means that the students- future dance teachers showed interest in achieving the objectives, accumulating knowledge, and having the desire to assert and achieve maximum performance.

Tab. 1. Average grades received for the artistic test

Year of study		Artistic test							
		Musical tempo		Sense of rhythm and stage appearance		Body plasticity		Dance-choreographic composition	
		Average	%	Average	%	Average	%	Average	%
2016-2017	1 st year	7,7	2,90%	8,0	5,90%	7,75	17,60%	7,0	11,80%
	2 nd year	8,0	14,30%	9,0	14,30%	8,0	7,10%	8,0	7,10%
2017-2018	1 st year	8,0	5,90%	9,2	2,90%	8,3	11,80%	8,0	14,70%
	2 nd year	8,5	10,70%	9,6	7,10%	8,5	3,60%	9,0	3,60%
2018-2019	1 st year	9,0	2,90%	9,5	5,90%	9,0	1,00%	9,2	17,60%
	2 nd year	9,5	14,30%	9,9	7,10%	9,15	7,10%	9,6	3,60%

In a chart, the students’ results look like this (Figure 1):

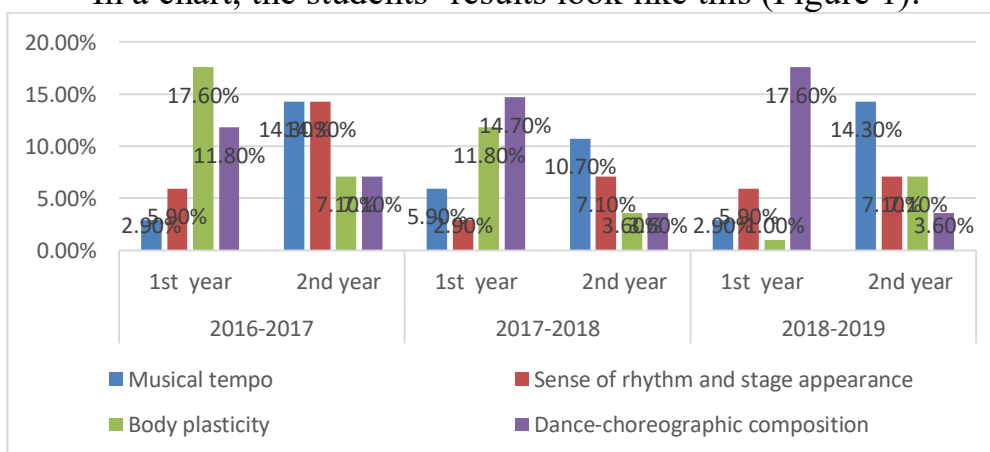


Fig. 1. Average grades received for the artistic test

An analysis of the interpretation of the dance steps of the students of the Dance specialty demonstrated the difference of the interpretation level precisely by rendering the emotional content of the performed dance through different affective nuances with the varied placement of the interpretive accents. The assessment of the results of the four artistic tests shows that the formation of artistic skills, namely *artistic expressiveness*, in students - future dance teachers has a positive impact, due to intellectual training through scientific knowledge and

information necessary for their qualitative training as specialists in the field. The results of the formative experiment highlight the indices of artistic activity obtained by students –future dance teachers during the studies in Cycle I (Bachelor), which represents the incipient activity of training artistic skills, designed and achieved significantly by representing and creating values-attitudes, values-creations and values-emotions thanks to the level of development of artistic values and of *artistic expressiveness* in the process of choreographic training.

Thus, *artistic expressiveness* in choreographic art is based on the emotionality of the performer / dancer, represented by the plasticity of the movements and the expression of his face in accordance with the content of the image, where the essence is the dancer's competent emotion. The non-verbal transmission of the content passes through the instrument of the performer / dancer, i.e. his body. In a choreographic work, it is not so substantial to know the “set” of steps or body positions according to the choreographer’s requirements, but his intention that the dancer / performer must express through artistic expressiveness (emotions, facial expressions, pantomime) so that the spectator understands the mastery of a dance or the plot of a choreographic show.

Despite the different approaches and points of view regarding *expressiveness*, however, the authors cited in the article are of the opinion that *expressiveness* is an original artistic interpretation, possessing an emotional saturation of artistic images, in which the attitude of the author and of the performer / dancer is present, the spiritual world of the creator, the experiences and feelings of the dancer. Historical development, the appearance of purely human feelings in the performing arts exerted an enormous influence on the development of the expressive movements of an actor / dancer. In the process of communication, expressive movements are enriched and differentiated, acquiring the character of a figurative language, a specific code to convey various nuances of feelings, appreciations, attitudes towards events and phenomena. The correct interpretation of expressive movements is made in the process of impact, more or less consciously, on the viewer.

G. D. Lebedeva writes that ballet theater, after losing its words, found expressive means, so clear and universal, that it became a social art that has no nationality. She argues her statement by the fact that classical dance belongs to the types of dance that affects the mind through feelings and instincts, in which the recognition of images must be infallible, because each of them is not just a sign, but a formula that expresses a category⁸. One of the famous dancers and choreographers of Russian origin, Mikhail Fokin, states the following about *artistic expressiveness* in dance: “sometimes a dance can express what a word is powerless to say”⁹. We can say that choreographic art is not an isolated set of certain components, elements, even types of dances, but their synthesis, where the main aspect is mutual influence, during which there is an effective (or inefficient) change in each component of the process. Even in choreographic works, in which the plot is missing, one can observe the transfer of emotion, mood and stylistic features of the music, and this should be taught by the dance teacher.

The analysis of theoretical sources revealed the importance of *artistic*

expressiveness in the art of performance, which is based on emotion. At the same time, emotional expressiveness is based on the exact knowledge and understanding of the content, the meaning of that artistic image created by the dancer / performer. In order for a student to be expressive in his stage evolution, he must be taught this occupation by a teacher who himself possesses a developed emotional and sensory framework. Thus, the two actors in the teaching-learning process, the teacher and the student, are in a continuous interconnection, where information about the movement taught by the dance teacher is broadcast to the student by audiovisual means, including an explanation of the movement and a pedagogical demonstration.

The use of figurative comparisons by the dance teacher helps the student to perform the movements more efficiently and expressively, creating a certain state / mood, which causes a desire to act actively. However, this method does not cancel the multiple repetitions of dance movements, because the student must train the muscular apparatus, to strengthen the ligaments, which can be achieved only through repetitive efforts, muscular tension, and coordination of all actions at the muscular level (achieving automatism). Mastery of the technical basis of choreographic art should take place in parallel with the development of the emotional component of the dancer / performer, i.e. *artistic expressiveness*.

On the research issue addressed in the teaching-learning process of *Classical Dance, Folk Dance* and *Modern Dance* disciplines, we designed a questionnaire that was distributed to teachers of *Preschool Pedagogy, Physical Education and Dance, Dance specialty*. The sample that filled out the questionnaire consisted of 6 dance teachers with a professional training in classical, folk and modern dance. The questionnaire included a number of items related to the current level of artistic training of students at the early stage, i.e. at the time of admission to studies at the “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University, Bachelor (cycle I).

Question no. 1: *Depending on your own opinion, distribute the value of the components of artistic training in students (future dance teachers) according to the ranking.* We observe the following ranking in regard to the value of the components of artistic training (Table 2).

Tab.2. Ranking of the components of artistic training in students – future dance teachers

Types of training	<i>aesthetics</i>	<i>plasticity</i>	<i>expressiveness</i>	<i>creativity</i>	<i>originality</i>
Average values (points)	2.4	2.8	3	2	1.2
Ranking	3	2	1	4	5

In choreographic art, *expressiveness* is the ability of the dancer / performer to convey the message of the choreographic work through facial expressions, pantomime, gesture, movement. One of the individual features of a dancer, who manages to capture the viewer’s attention, is *artistic expressiveness*, thus, it occupies the first place in our ranking. It should be mentioned that body plasticity is the specific and mandatory component for classical and modern dance, but when performing the tricks of folk dance, the component-plasticity, has a leading place, so we have it ranked second.

Analyzing the following items, the opinions of dance teachers show that the aesthetics of artistic performance ranks third, with an average of **2.4 points**, representing the values of beauty existent in choreographic art, attributed to the level of artistic education and expressed at an informative-formative level. Creativity is on the 4th place with the average of the values of **2 points** and originality is on the 5th place - with **1.2 points**, which has a real indisputable value through authenticity. Creativity and originality are categories of motor intelligence, which determine the competence of execution.

The possibilities of movement in choreographic art are boundless as long as the dancer / performer, and in our case the student- future dance teacher, use their imagination and creativity. All these endow the student with individuality, personal memory and form an artistic aspect. Preparation of choreographic compositions by looking for movements and combinations of movements, the work with musical accompaniment, the training and improvement of choreographic compositions and development of performance qualities, contribute to the formation of virtuosity and artistry in students of Dance specialty. At question "in your opinion, is it necessary to include the artistic expressiveness component in the teaching-learning process from the incipient stage with a well-established program for the students of the Dance specialty?", of the total number of surveyed dance teachers - 83% agree that it is necessary to develop/train *artistic expressiveness* component in the teaching-learning process in the disciplines Classical Dance, Folk Dance and Modern Dance and include it in a well determined program (Figure 2).

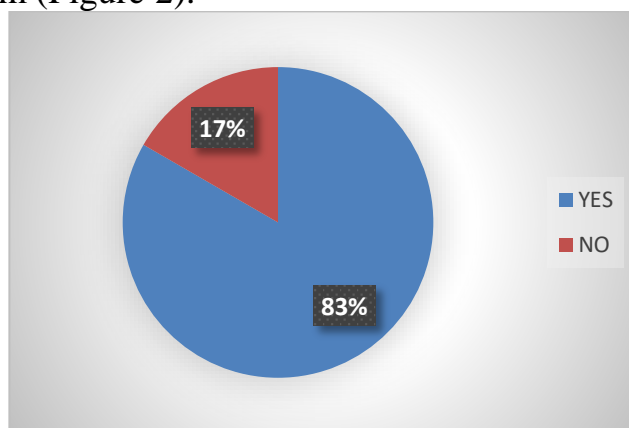


Fig. 2. The need to implement a special program for training / developing artistic expressiveness

4. Conclusions

Thus, we conclude that *artistic expressiveness* as an exact and complete consistency of the interpreted choreographic composition (from an educational combination to an artistic-scenic image) founded on the author's intention, musical background, own attitude based on emotionality. When performing choreographic works, the dancer / performer embodies the ideas generated by his own imagination, seeking to reveal his inner world with the help of various artistic means.

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