

BODY SHADOW THEATRE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION TO PROMOTE THE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF SCHOOLCHILDREN: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

TEATRO DE SOMBRAS CORPORALES EN EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA PARA FAVORECER EL BIENESTAR EMOCIONAL DE ESCOLARES: PERSPECTIVA DE GÉNERO

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Abstract

The present study was based on the possibilities offered by body shadow theatre as a resource and content to promote the emotional well-being of girls and boys from an early age. A total of 118 primary school students (60 boys and 58 girls) from a school in south-eastern Spain participated. They assessed the emotional intensity they experienced through the Games and Emotions Scale for Children (GES-C) instrument and explained which emotion they had felt more intensely and why, through drawings and/or comments. The data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 27.0 for Windows and an inductive categorization using NVivo software. The results showed that the expressive motor situations presented through body shadow theatre favored the intense experience of positive emotions ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.40$) significantly ($p = .000$) in relation to negative emotions ($M = 1.17$, $SD = 0.47$). Boys and girls justified emotional well-being with personal and body shadow theatre aspects. Girls, unlike boys, emphasized social relationships during expressive motor practice. The conclusions showed that the free and creative expressive motor situations presented in body shadow theatre favored emotional well-being in both girls and boys.

Keywords: Expressive motor situations, emotion, didactic resources, socio-cultural constructions, physical education.

Resumen

El presente estudio se basó en conocer las posibilidades que ofrece el teatro de sombras corporales como recurso y contenido para favorecer el bienestar emocional de chicas y chicos desde edades tempranas. Participaron un total 118 estudiantes de educación primaria (60 chicos y 58 chicas) de un centro educativo situado en el sureste de España. Valoraron la intensidad emocional que experimentaron a través del instrumento Games and Emotions Scale for Children (GES-C) y explicaron qué emoción habían sentido con mayor intensidad y por qué, a través de dibujos y/o comentarios. Los datos obtenidos se analizaron mediante el Statistical Package for Social Sciences versión 27.0 para Windows y una categorización inductiva utilizando el software NVivo. Los resultados mostraron que las situaciones motrices expresivas planteadas a través del teatro de sombras corporal favorecieron la vivencia intensa de emociones positivas ($M = 5.02$, $DT = 1.40$) de forma significativa ($p = .000$) con relación a las emociones negativas ($M = 1.17$, $DT = 0.47$). Los chicos y las chicas justificaron el bienestar emocional con aspectos personales y propios del teatro de sombras corporales. Las chicas, a diferencia de los chicos, destacaron las relaciones sociales durante la práctica motriz expresiva. Las conclusiones mostraron que las situaciones motrices expresivas libres y creativas planteadas en el teatro de sombras corporal favorece el bienestar emocional tanto en chicas como chicos.

Palabras clave: Situaciones motrices expresivas, emoción, recursos didácticos, construcciones socio-culturales, educación física.



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Introduction

Body Shadow Theatre as a Didactic Resource

Body shadow theatre is understood as the representation of stories, scenes, situations, etc., mainly with body shadows (accompanied by objects) that are projected onto a cloth or similar thanks to a spotlight. It is considered a didactic resource that favours the work of expression and communication in body language (Cifo & Ureña, 2022), as well as spontaneity and improvisation (Pérez et al., 2012). On the one hand, it awakens curiosity in students, motivating their involvement in the teaching-learning process (Pérez-Pueyo et al., 2010). And, on the other hand, it allows the work on interculturality and the development of the contents of corporal expression from spontaneity and creativity (Cifo & Ureña, 2022).

In turn, this didactic resource can enable different expressive motor situations (EMS) characterised by an internal and external logic, loaded with symbolic and referential meaning (Mateu & Torrents, 2012; Parlebas, 2003). In this sense, we should not only contemplate those EMS focused on the expression itself or on the reproduction of models without the intention of communicating or representing something in particular (such as dancing for the sake of dancing), but also those that inherently communicate a message, idea, emotion, etc., to an audience through body language (Troya, 2018). Body shadow theatre allows both EMS proposals based on the reproduction of previously established models (such as representing animal flashcards through body posture) through the execution and expression itself without the presence of spectators, and EMS proposals based on improvisation (such as improvising animal postures through body posture) through creative expression on the fly and its communication to spectators.

In line with the above, Ribas and Mateu (2020) consider four creative processes classified into three degrees of creativity that can occur during the practice of EMS. Firstly, minimal creativity in imitative EMS. Secondly, intermediate creativity in EMS suggesting variation and composition. And third and lastly, maximum creativity in improvisational EMS. This differentiation relates the degree of codification (regulation) of the EMS (Mateu & Coelho, 2011) and the degree of uncertainty of the participants during the performance of the EMS (Ribas, 2018). Thus, when performing EMS of: a) imitation, creativity is determined (with regulation and without uncertainty); b) variation and composition, creativity is semi-determined (with regulation and uncertainty); and c) improvisation, creativity is not determined (without regulation and with uncertainty) (Ribas & Mateu, 2020).

Through body shadow theatre, a variety of EMS could be proposed according to the creative processes and degrees of creativity, with the aim of originating motor behaviours that encompass the whole person and are oriented towards personal well-being. There are differences in the emotional experience of students when participating in EMS depending on their internal logic (Gómez-Carmona et al., 2019).

Body Shadow Theatre and Emotional Well-Being

For years, the possibilities and importance of corporal expression for health have been highlighted, not only in relation to physical, cognitive or social aspects, but also to emotional ones (Álvarez & Quintana, 2010). Pérez-Pueyo and Casado (2011) state that in body shadow theatre students face the difficulties of expressing and creating, which can originate and intensify the feeling of ridicule and the emotion of shame. It is still evident that a high percentage of Primary Education students do not receive training on the content of corporal expression (Bonet & Menescardi, 2022), so some expressive resources may be novel for them. When introducing EMS through body shadow theatre, pupils could experience the same level of expressive and communicative competence (Pallarés et al., 2014). Therefore, students end up participating and integrating in the development of the experience (Cifo & Ureña, 2022).

Moreover, emotional well-being may also be conditioned by the motor objective of each EMS (Torrents et al., 2011; Troya, 2018). Well-being is favoured if the motor objective of the EMS does not require a technique in its execution or the reproduction of models (López-Villar & Canales-Lacruz, 2007), that is, if the motor objective of the EMS offers a creative and spontaneous experience, where greater importance is given to enjoyment and personal bodily expression (Cifo & Ureña, 2022).

In line with the above, it should be noted that different studies affirm that EMS promote well-being (Alonso et al., 2019; Ruiz-Vico & Cifo, 2020; Torrents et al., 2011). However, the emotion of shame is intensified in the initiation phases of body expression (Torrents et al., 2011). Through body shadow theatre, it is possible to integrate the participation of the most shy and shameful students (Cifo & Ureña, 2022; Pallarés et al., 2014). Although they face the difficulties of expressing and creating, body shadow theatre presents a clear difference with respect to other didactic resources, the presence of a cloth or sheet between actors and spectators. This allows that during the process of corporal communication there is no direct exposure to the spectators, but an indirect exposure that provides security and favours well-being (López-Villar & Canales-Lacruz, 2007). This characteristic should be highlighted when considering the existence of a relationship between the comfort and discomfort experienced by the students and the internal logic of the EMS, since the presence or absence of spectators conditions the emotional experience in the EMS (Canales-Lacruz & Corral-Abós, 2021). These authors associate

the role of spectator with comfort and the role of actor with discomfort and point out that, in the absence of observers, students show greater comfort in improvisations than in the presence of observers. Ruiz-Vico and Cifo (2020) indicate that one of the reasons why students experience the emotion of embarrassment in EMS is because they feel observed. When students are observed during EMS they experience discomfort, unease and ridicule (Canales-Lacruz, 2009).

Body Shadow Theatre, Emotional Wellbeing and Gender

According to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 (United Nations, 2015), one of the main challenges and goals is: "5. Taking into account that "gender is understood as the socio-cultural constructs that differentiate and shape the roles, perceptions and status of women and men in a society" (UNESCO, 2014, p.104), when a person participates in a motor situation they are entering a social system (Alonso et al., 2019) that is usually associated with the male or female gender (Alcaraz et al., 2023). In this sense, EMS could be a good scenario to generate socialisation processes between both genders oriented towards equality.

Several studies show that there are stereotypes associated with the female gender when participating in EMS (Alonso et al., 2019; Papí-Monzó et al., 2021). In contrast, Bonet and Menescardi (2022), after carrying out a study with students in the first year of Compulsory Secondary Education, state that most of them do not have a stereotypical opinion towards the content of corporal expression. However, the teachers involved in the experience point out that there is a minority who make stereotypical statements.

There are still differences in the feeling of motor competence between girls and boys when participating in EMS (Papí-Monzó et al., 2021). Although this is still a reality, it is also true that the majority of students reject the reproduction of traditional gender stereotypes in EMS (Bonet & Menescardi, 2022). These differences in the level of motor competence when performing EMS may be determined by the contents worked on (Papí-Monzó et al., 2021). For example, girls generally prefer EMS in physical education sessions compared to boys (Arias et al., 2021). This difference is noticeable when performing dance EMS. This is why the content to be worked on in EMS should be varied, since, as Sevil et al. (2016) point out, the feeling of expressive motor competence in boys increases when the content of EMS is varied.

This gives an important role to the teaching role. Teachers must guarantee positive emotional experiences for students (Gea et al., 2017; Gil-Madrona et al., 2021; Muñoz-Oliver et al., 2022; Sáez de Ocáriz et al., 2014), improving attitudes and socio-cultural constructions towards PE in general and EMS in particular (Arias et al., 2021). Teachers of PE through EMS from an early age should educate in gender equality in order to eliminate stereotypical constructions (Arias et al., 2021; Bonet & Menescardi, 2022; Torrents et al., 2011).

For all these reasons, it is interesting to know the possibilities offered by body shadow theatre as a resource and content to promote emotional well-being from an early age, considering the gender of the learners.

After reviewing the literature and analysing previous studies, the following objectives were set:

1. To analyse the emotional intensity experienced when participating in expressive motor situations through body shadow theatre.

The following hypothesis was derived from this first objective: Body shadow theatre increases the emotional intensity of the participants.

2. To analyse the emotional intensity experienced by girls and boys when intervening in expressive motor situations through body shadow theatre.

For this objective, the following hypothesis was elaborated: Girls experience positive emotions more intensely than boys when performing body shadow theatre.

3. To examine the comments made by girls and boys about the type of positive emotion experienced with greater intensity when participating in expressive motor situations through body shadow theatre.

The hypothesis that was raised from this last objective was: Both girls and boys mention the same aspects of body shadow theatre as determinants in the experience of positive emotions.

Materials and Methods

Design and Participants

A descriptive, cross-sectional study design with non-probabilistic sampling was used. A total of 118 primary school students (60 boys and 58 girls; age range = 6-11 years, $M = 8.30$, $SD = 0.95$) from a Spanish public school participated. The data were collected in a cross-sectional experience organised by the school during regular school hours. This study was conducted with the approval of the University Research Ethics Committee (ID: 1684/2017).

Instruments

The first version of the Games and Emotions Scale for Children (GES-C) validated by Alcaraz-Muñoz et al. (2022) was used to assess emotional intensity. This first version of the scale included three basic and universal negative emotions (Ekman, 1993) such as anger, sadness and fear, and three positive emotions such as joy, affection (Goleman, 2013) and surprise, which according to Lazarus (1991) can be considered more positive than ambiguous, as it is mostly associated with favourable situations. This selection of emotions was made based on the classification proposed by Bisquerra (2009) for educational purposes. Each item was rated on a Likert scale from 1 (I felt nothing) to 7 (I felt a lot). In addition, symbolic representations of each of the emotions and their intensity were included along with the numerical scale, following the recommendations of DeKlerk et al. (2014) in a study with children. A qualitative data collection section was also considered, focused on the emotional experience associated with the physical artistic-expressive content worked on. The schoolchildren were asked to explain which emotion they had felt most intensely and why, together with a free choice between drawing and/or commenting. For each emotion identified (positive or negative), an average value of the emotional intensity experienced was obtained.

In terms of reliability, Cronbach's alpha value indicated that the internal consistency was good both for positive ($\alpha = .85$) and negative emotions ($\alpha = .79$). Confirmatory factor analysis adequately reproduced the scale structure and showed good fit indices [minimum $\chi^2/df = 1.35$; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .98; comparative fit index (CFI) = .98; root mean squared error of approximation ($RMSEA$) = .048 (LO90 = .000 - HI90 = .086)].

Procedure

The students participated in a 60-minute session. First, the functioning of the scale and the six emotions included in it were explained to them in order to facilitate their recognition. Subsequently, the study intervention was developed (see Table 1), which consisted of five physical artistic-expressive activities structured in four blocks and taught by an expert. The materials used were two canvases and two spotlights (a projector and a spotlight). At the end of the session, the students filled in the first version of the GES-C in which they recorded the level of intensity, from 1 to 7, that they had experienced in each of the six emotions considered in the scale. Immediately afterwards, they described and/or briefly drew an explanation of why they had felt the most intense emotion associated with the content they had worked on.

Table 1
Description of the physical artistic-expressive activities used in the study

ACTIVITIES TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MATERIALS AND SHADOWS
Say my name: the pupils are divided into two large groups, one on each side of the sheet. The sheet is placed as a screen between the two groups so that neither side can be seen. From each group, one person from each group approaches the sheet, in total and absolute silence. When they are ready, the sheet will be lowered and they will have to say the name of the partner in front of them. The winner is the group of the person who manages to say the name of the opponent first.
In the light and in the shade: the whole group, according to the teacher's instructions, must position themselves inside the spotlight or outside the spotlight. The teacher will project a light on the floor and move it around the space, making short stops. Firstly, the students must follow the light, without stepping on it, always staying outside it, in the shadow. Secondly, the pupils must follow the spotlight and place them inside the light when the stop is made.
INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES IN SHADOW PROJECTION
Parade of models: in two large groups, one group will play the role of actor and the other group will play the role of spectator. The actor group will be positioned between light and shadow. The members of this group will go out one by one, walking as in their daily life and the spectators will have to recognise the shadow of each partner as they walk from the spotlight to the canvas. If the role-playing partners do not recognise the shadow of the parading partner in the way they walk, the pupil in the role of actor will have to parade again. When they have all left, the roles change. The actors become spectators and vice versa.
RECREATIONAL AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
Who is who: in two large groups, one group will play the role of actor and the other group the role of spectator. The actor group will be positioned between the light and the shadow. The members of this group will come out one by one. In this case, they will have to move from the spotlight to the canvas, experimenting with different body shapes (crawling, crawling, ball-shaped, etc.). The pupils in the role of actors will try to confuse the spectators through their body language, so that they do not guess who they are. The pupil in the role of actor will continue to create different forms of body movement until the spectators guess who it is. When they have all come out, the roles will change. The actors become spectators and vice versa.
PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVISATION ACTIVITIES
My favourite sport: in two large groups, one group will play the role of actor and the other group the role of spectator. The actor group is positioned between the light and the shadow. The members of this group will come out one by one. In an expressive motor situation, they will have to enter the stage approaching the canvas individually and they will have to represent the sport they like the most only with movement and body language. The spectators will try to guess it. As long as the spectators do not guess the sport, the actor will continue to perform different improvised movements related to the preferred sport. When everyone has come out, the roles will change. The actors become spectators and vice versa.

Quantitative Statistical Analysis

Means and standard deviations were calculated for each variable. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed a normal distribution of the data, therefore, Student's parametric t-test for related and independent samples and Levene's test for homogeneity of variance were applied. A *p*-value of .05 was used for all statistical tests. Effect size (*ES*) results of interactions between variables were also calculated using partial eta squared (η^2). All analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 27.0 for Windows.

Qualitative Statistical Analysis

The proposal of Trigueros et al. (2019) was followed, carrying out a categorical analysis using the descriptive technique of open-ended written questionnaires. Participants responded to the researcher's interests or questions. From the responses, an inductive categorisation was carried out using NVivo software. Four categories emerged (see Figure 1): 1) personal well-being; 2) social well-being; 3) technical well-being or EMS; and 4) acquired role well-being. The analysis started with a total of 156 references provided by the students, categorised into the four identified themes.

Figure 1
 Categories of analysis

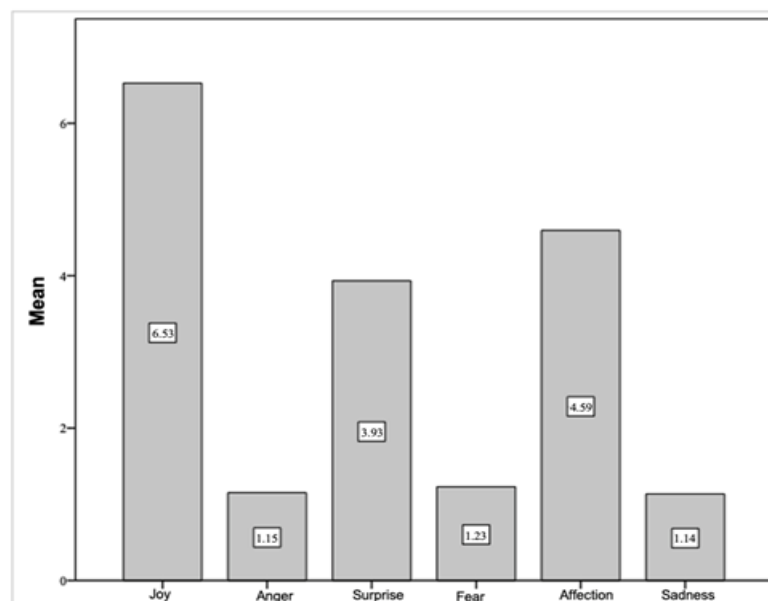
Name	Archives	References
Personal well-being	1	75
Well-being role	1	14
Social well-being	1	21
Well-being body shadow theatre	1	46

Results

Results of Quantitative Statistical Analysis

The Student's t-test for related samples showed that when schoolchildren took part in the body shadow theatre, they experienced positive emotions ($M = 5.02, SD = 1.40$) significantly ($p = .000$) more intensely than negative emotions ($M = 1.17, SD = 0.47$) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
 Intensity of emotions experienced



Regarding the gender of the participants, the interaction with emotional intensity also showed significant differences ($p < .05$) according to the type of emotion experienced. Negative emotions were experienced significantly less intensely by girls ($M = 1.09, SD = 0.28, p = .049$) than boys ($M = 1.26, SD = 0.59$) ($F = 2.797, ES = 0.137$). However, with respect to positive emotions no significant gender differences were found ($p > .05$), both boys and girls recorded similar positive emotional intensity (boys: $M = 5.05, SD = 1.47$; girls: $M = 4.98, SD = 1.34$) ($F = 0.880, ES = 0.098$).

Results of Qualitative Statistical Analysis

The analysis was based on the interpretation and visualisation of the weight of the well-being experienced by the students in the four categories identified (personal well-being; social well-being; technical well-being or EMS; and acquired role well-being) according to the gender attribute. Table 2 shows that the intensities varied according to category and gender.

Table 2
Presence of categories by attribute gender

Category	Boys	Girls
Personal well-being		
Role wellbeing		
Social well-being		
Well-being body shadow theatre		

Note: The intensity of the colours shows the frequency of the categories.

The role acquired (spectator or actor) during student participation was not as important for the well-being of girls and boys as other aspects. The boys mainly justified the well-being experienced in personal aspects, such as personal satisfaction or enjoyment, for example “because I had a great time and I liked it”, “because I had a lot of fun”, etc. Secondly, they also associated the well-being experienced to aspects of the expressive resource used, the body shadow theatre. In this sense, they expressed that “...I danced”, “...I didn’t know that we were going to perform and they had to guess”, “...I played in the competition”, etc. The girls also justified their well-being in the personal and body shadow theatre aspects, although with less intensity than the boys. However, unlike the boys, the girls emphasised the social relations during the expressive motor practice as a determinant of well-being. Some of their comments were: “because we have played together”, “...when we have all gone out in groups”, “because we have been playing with all our classmates”.

Subsequently, the analysis continued with the interpretation and visualisation of the weight of the emotional well-being experienced by the students in the four categories identified (personal well-being; social well-being; technical well-being or EMS; and acquired role well-being) according to the attributes gender and most intense emotion (see Table 3).

Table 3
Presence of categories by attribute gender

Sex	More intense emotion	Categories			
		Personal well-being	Role well-being	Social well-being	Well-being body shadow theatre
Boys	Joy				
	Affection				
	Surprise				
	Happiness				
Girls	Joy				
	Affection				
	Surprise				
	Happiness				

Note: The intensity of the colors shows the frequency of the categories.

It could be observed that in both boys and girls the well-being was originated by intensely experiencing the emotion of joy when participating in the body shadow theatre. This confirms once again that this expressive resource favours the emotional well-being of the pupils, regardless of whether they are girls or boys. The joy experienced by the pupils is mainly a consequence of personal aspects (such as personal satisfaction), as well as the characteristics of body shadow theatre (such as expressing and communicating), the social relationships established (cooperating to express and communicate a sport), and the roles adopted during the EMS (actor or spectator).

Discussion

The first objective was based on analysing the emotional intensity experienced when participating in EMS through body shadow theatre. The analysis of the results allows us to affirm that the EMS through body shadow theatre promote the well-being of the participating pupils. When participating in the EMS through body shadow theatre, the pupils valued positive emotions more highly than negative ones. The results were in line with those obtained in the works of Alonso et al. (2019), Ruiz-Vico and Cifo (2020) and Torrents et al. (2011), in considering that EMS promote well-being. In this sense, body shadow theatre can be a good methodological resource for creating emotionally positive EMS.

The second objective was to find out the emotional intensity experienced by girls and boys when intervening in EMS through body shadow theatre. Through the analysis of the results, it was observed that the discomfort is determined in the EMS raised through body shadow theatre by gender. Girls rated negative emotions less highly than boys. However, the emotions experienced with greater intensity in the EMS were the positive ones, with no differences between genders. Although to a lesser extent, this fact confirms that EMS show stereotypes associated with girls in the early ages (Alonso et al., 2019; Bonet & Menescardi, 2022; Papí-Monzó et al., 2021), which is why boys experience negative emotions more intensely than girls. Since, when participating in EMS, the perception of motor competence in girls and boys is different (Papí-Monzó et al., 2021), it was key in this work to vary the contents of the EMS proposed in the body shadow theatre. Thus, both girls and boys worked on dance, mime, rhythm, etc., in the different EMS of body shadow theatre. Therefore, although girls prefer the EMS to boys (Arias et al., 2021), it is necessary to vary the expressive motor work contents in the EMS in order to increase the perception of motor competence in boys (Papí-Monzó et al., 2021; Sevil et al., 2016).

In relation to the third objective, we analysed the comments made by girls and boys about the type of positive emotion experienced more intensely when participating in EMS through body shadow theatre. In this sense, both girls and boys mentioned the same personal and body shadow theatre aspects as determinants in the experience of positive emotions. The boys valued mainly the personal aspects for their well-being, while the girls established a balance between personal, social and body shadow theatre aspects. Both girls and boys faced difficulties in expressing, creating and communicating, however, the experience of the emotion joy was favoured in contrast to the study by Pérez-Pueyo and Casado (2011). This could be due to the motor objectives set, as according to López-Villar and Canales-Lacruz (2007), Torrents et al. (2011) and Troya (2018) these can condition the emotional well-being of the students. Following the authors' line, the EMS proposals in the body shadow theatre of this study moved away from the reproduction of models and approached a freer, creative and spontaneous experience that originated emotional well-being. Furthermore, Cifo and Ureña (2022) add that this type of EMS (free and creative) favours the enjoyment of personal bodily expression, an aspect that was mainly highlighted by boys in their comments. In addition, girls also mainly highlighted their well-being associated with social aspects compared to boys. Therefore, it is also necessary to highlight the value of social relationships during EMS in fostering emotional well-being (Armada et al., 2021; Rivera & Velázquez, 2017).

Different studies establish embarrassment as the most characteristic emotion in these situations, as well as other states such as discomfort, uneasiness, shyness (Canales-Lacruz, 2009; Ruiz-Vico & Cifo, 2020; Torrents et al., 2011), due to the fact of feeling observed. However, the role acquired (spectator or actor) during student participation was not so decisive for the well-being of girls and boys, in relation to other aspects. In body shadow theatre, the students are not so exposed to observation by the rest of their peers, so it can be pointed out that the use of the sheet or cloth is another reason why both girls and boys pointed out joy as the most intensely experienced emotion, regardless of being actors or spectators. In this way, students integrate and participate, their shyness and embarrassment taking a back seat (Cifo & Ureña, 2022; Pallarés et al. 2014). In line with López-Villar and Canales-Lacruz (2007), in body shadow theatre there is an indirect exposure, which guarantees the well-being of the students. Therefore, although the presence or absence of spectators can determine the emotional experience of students in EMS, being positive without spectators and negative with spectators (Canales-Lacruz & Corral-Abós, 2021), according to the results of this study, the presence of a cloth or sheet between spectators and actors favors the well-being of girls and boys.

If the aim is to guide PE and EMS from a gender perspective, positive emotional experiences should be guaranteed in both girls and boys (Gea et al., 2017; Gil-Madrona et al., 2021; Muñoz-Oliver et al., 2022; Sáez de Ocáriz et al., 2014) and improve attitudes and sociocultural constructions, free of sexist stereotypes (Arias et al., 2021; Bonet & Menescardi, 2022; Torrents et al., 2011).

EMS in Physical Education can be a good tool to promote the emotional well-being of schoolchildren, from a gender perspective. In particular, body shadow theatre as an expressive content and didactic resource offers the ideal conditions for this. In summary, it can be said that body shadow theatre in primary school:

- a. It promotes well-being in both girls and boys, since it allows personal satisfaction in both genders.
- b. It enables free body expression and communication.

- c. Improves well-being regardless of the role adopted during the EMS (actor or spectator) as there is a cloth or sheet that limits the total exposure.

Therefore, when working on emotional well-being through body shadow theater, from a gender perspective, with primary school students, the following should be taken into account:

- a. Encourage spontaneous and free expression and communication, personal of each student, avoiding the reproduction of models.
- b. Vary the expressive motor content when planning a session.
- c. To set up cooperative EMS, in which at least two people have to help each other to express and communicate a message, idea, emotion, etc.
- d. Establish the roles of actor and spectator, and change them constantly to work on respect for one's own and others' productions and learn to value them.

These are four basic aspects to take into account if we want to promote the emotional well-being of students, considering their gender, through EMS in body shadow theatre. Likewise, EMS in shadow theatre becomes a good scenario to generate socialisation processes between both genders. In future research, it would be necessary to orientate these pedagogical interventions towards equality if the aspects highlighted above are taken into account.

Conclusions

The findings are reflected below in the form of conclusions, based on the discussion and the previous objectives set out:

The first objective was based on analysing the emotional intensity experienced when participating in expressive motor situations through body shadow theatre. The hypothesis formulated is confirmed, and it is concluded that body shadow theatre increases the positive emotional intensity of the participants.

The second objective was focused on knowing the emotional intensity experienced by girls and boys when intervening in expressive motor situations through body shadow theatre. The conclusion drawn does not confirm the hypothesis defined. Girls value positive emotions with a similar intensity to boys.

The third objective consisted of analyzing the comments made by girls and boys about the type of positive emotion experienced with greater intensity when participating in expressive motor situations through body shadow theatre. The conclusion drawn does not confirm the previously defined hypothesis. Both girls and boys mention the same personal and body shadow theatre aspects as determinants in the experience of positive emotions. Boys mainly value personal aspects for their well-being, while girls establish a balance between personal, social and body shadow theatre aspects.

Finally, it should be noted that the main limitation of this experience was that we did not collect information about the reasons why the pupils experienced discomfort or negative emotions when participating in the EMS. Although students were asked to explain which emotion they had felt most intensely and why, the most intense emotion in each case was positive and no comments were made about the negative ones. Therefore, it is necessary to continue researching in this line and collect information on the reasons that caused them to experience discomfort or negative emotions when participating in the EMS, always in the case that they have originated.

Ethics Committee Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Ethics Committee: Universidad de Murcia (ID: 1684/2017).

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest. The funding agency had no influence on the development of the study.

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Authors' Contribution

Conceptualization M.C. & V.A-M.; Methodology M.C. & V.A-M.; Validation M.C. & V.A-M.; Formal Analysis M.C. & V.A-M.;

Investigation M.C. & V.A-M.; Resources M.C. & V.A-M.; Data Curation M.C. & V.A-M.; Writing – Original Draft M.C. & V.A-M.; Writing – Review & Editing M.C. & V.A-M.; Supervision M.C. & V.A-M.; Project Administration M.C. & V.A-M. Funding Acquisition V.A.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author valcaraz@ucam.edu

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