



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE
Volume 11 Issue 4 Version 1.0 July 2011
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Teaching Classical Ballet : educational features and health conditions Study of the plantar stance of the students of the school of Classical Ballet of the San Carlo Theatre of Naples (Italy) while performing the ballet

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GJHSS-C Classification : *FOR Code: 190299*



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1. INTRODUCTION

M Fokine, who was the first choreographer of the *Ballets Russes* and a forerunner of the neoclassical style, stated: "To judge a dancer, all you have to do is to see how he uses his feet ..."

Posture has a main role in the classical ballet, since it is essential to put all the parts of the body in the right position. Specifically, its anatomical supports are the following ones:

- forefoot, arch of the foot and heel
- coxo-femoral and sacroiliac joints
- spine
- blades

The right position is given by the exact relation among the above mentioned elements, which should be perfectly balanced and linked by an ideal line which starts from the occiput and goes down till the heels. The head should be hold up high and be on the same vertical line of the feet. Moreover, it is important that the trunk is always hold up and stretched out, with the shoulders down and the neck stretched. The right position of the body expects the trunk to be upright and stiff, thanks to a counter-rotation movement (back tilt) of the pelvis, and a consequent reduction of the width of all the physiological curves of the rachis and a horizontal position of the pelvis itself.

According to this theory, the horizontal position of the pelvis allows the coxo-femoral joint to move more freely, since the head of the thigh-bone can widen the rotation inside the acetabulum. This introduces a new factor, the *en dehors*, which completes the right position of the body of a ballet dancer. The French word *dehors* means "outside" and it refers to a 90° extra-rotation position of the coxo-femoral joints and of the whole lower limbs. Anyway, this position, which fixes the direction of the movements and the main positions of this technique, can be also a natural talent of the ballet dancer and so it can be considered a bent.

There is an extension of all joints of the foot in the execution of the tip; in this case the most important role is played by the tibio-talar, involved in the formation of the "neck of the foot". The plantar flexion in fact leads to the alignment of the bones of the foot so that the weight is unloaded only along an imaginary "knee-malleolus-metatarsal head-foot fingers" axis.

Many neurophysiological and biomechanics studies (Bricot, B., 1998 Villeneuve, P., 2010) showed the importance of the role of the foot as main receptor of the postural system and the importance of the podalic afferents while regulating and controlling the posture. In static conditions, the foot rests on the ground mainly with the head of the first metatarsal, on the fifth metatarsal and on the back alcaneal tuberosity.

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On these points you should download, respectively, download, respectively, 33%, 17% and 50% of the body's weight. The posture of a person depends on a specific muscle activity known as "postural". This activity is mainly carried out by the extensor muscles of the lower limbs, the muscles of the trunk and those of the neck. It aims at maintaining the projection on the floor of the center of gravity of the subject within the bearing surface (polygon). The maintenance of the orthostatic posture also requires the integration of visual, proprioceptive, labyrinthine and foot information. Many experimental protocols use stabilometry as a method of measuring postural equilibrium in man. Stabilometry records the coordinates of the center of pressure (COP) on a platform on which the subject is in an orthostatic position. Starting from these coordinates, it is possible to calculate many different parameters which Chiari, Rocchi and Cappello (2002) have classified into three different categories:

- a) The first one includes the most common parameters in literature which consider the space and time features of COP. For example, it is possible to calculate the type of postural balance and the needed energy to maintain it, the COP area, distances, the speed, etc. Moreover, it is possible to calculate the COP average position in terms of a fixed reference or relation to anthropometric data (for example, the size of the polygon, Kirby, Price e MacLeod, 1987).
- b) The second category consists of parameters such as the specific type of the frequency (Fast Fourier Transform: FFT).
- c) The third one represents the stochastic parameters (Collins e De Luca, 1993).

Hence, the second and third categories allow to evaluate the dynamic aspect of the control of the orthostatic posture. The study of the dancer's foot has to consider complex elements, because of the many stresses the foot anatomic structure receives and the many pathological changes that might rise. In fact, the dancer's foot is a strong, steady, particularly sensitive, fast and exact structure, which is constantly stressed during the exploitation of its capsule-ligament structure according to the required strong muscular work. Actually, unlike other motor activities, such as walking, running or jumping, it is evident that during the classical ballet the foot has to continuously change its trim, repeatedly and almost cyclically going from bipodalic stances to monopodalic ones; in this way it distributes the load on the arch of the foot. These changes of the balance, causing muscle-skeletal imbalances, constantly undermine not only the foot but also several areas of the body. The research studied the dancers of the Ballet School of the San Carlo Theatre of Naples. The course attended by the students provides an eight levels program; besides the study and the practice of the ballet, there are other subjects such as solfeggio, the

history of the music, the history of the dance, gym, athletic training, modern dance, character dance, Spanish dance, *pas de deux* and physio-technique.

The student's training starts with a tree time a week course which lasts 1.30 hour a day for the preliminary students. First class students attend a 1.30 hour training daily course 5 times a week. Seventh and eighth courses students attend a 3 hours training daily course 6 times a week. The training schedules a two phases lesson, during the first phase there are bar exercises. These exercises gradually help the joints mobility, the strength of the legs and the feet, the motor control and the movements coordination. The second phase of the training schedules exercises to be performed in the center and new elements of the allegro, tours, aplomb and jump elevation and ballon are gradually introduced.

Therefore it is a kind of training which demands highly concentrated physical activities, which become more and more demanding as years go. The training program, which during the seventh and eighth year courses has to reach an excellent technical and performing perfection, diversifies the male and female technical activities starting from the second year course. This different kind of training is carried out through some specific exercises, that is the study of the tips for the women, starting from the second year course (11/12 years old), and the jumping technique for the men. It is useful to highlight that the female dancers make greater efforts because they use the pointe shoes. These shoes expose them to continuous trauma and their use may cause aches and dysmorphology of the foot, because of the poor distribution of the load and the support, with consequences borne by the rachis and the lower limbs.

The required performance, the strong technique and the severe and systematic training techniques, make the dance a highly competitive sport activity. The subject can get a great advantage from this activity which, especially when practiced since a very young age, can develop in a harmonious way the muscular system, increasing the joints mobility and giving tonicity and suppleness to the muscular system. (Morris N.R. Van de Wetering A.W., De Rooij and. Sabapathy S., 2009). The research studied the possible relationship between the biomechanic conditions demanded by the technique of the ballet and by the possible changes of the plantar support, analysing any possible effect on the posture. The survey also meant to highlight any significant difference between the plantar support of the female and male students.

II. METHODS

The protocol of the research has been previously set thanks to the joint action of the researchers of the University of Salerno and the management of the Ballet School, which promoted and

shared the aims of the survey. The adopted procedural choices scheduled the following:

- 1) A specific agreement between the two bodies;
- 2) The group of research of the University of Salerno and the teachers of the San Carlo Theatre shared the use of the technology aimed at a descriptive study about the possible relationship between the foot structure and the practice of the ballet technique, studying the students of the Ballet school of the San Carlo Theatre of Naples.

In our case, the area of application covered the simple and fast static analysis of the load distribution, in order to fix the functionality of the foot in young dancers performing the classical ballet as a high competitive sport.

The actions performed at the school to carry out the experimental phase have been :

- 1) Setting up an integrated plan Ballet School of the San Carlo Theatre-University to share the aims, the methodologies and the procedures of the research.
- 2) Setting up an information sheet to collect data on the age, anthropometric data, the diet, the lifestyles and the type of sport practiced by students.
- 3) Analysis of the plantar support through a practical and prompt system of analysis : PDM – Platform of multi-functional strength.

It seems worthwhile to underline that the sharing of the research project has provided a first opportunity for comparison among the researches, the teachers and the director of the school in order to discuss about the organizational and executive methods of the research and obtain specific information about the training of the subjects observed. A later meeting with the students has been organized to obtain personal anthropometric information (parameters of structure, age, sex, height).

The criteria of inclusion have been:

- absence of dimorphism.
- standard weight and height,
- postural treatment performed during sports training.

On the basis of the data collected, it has been expected the following:

- 1) To compare the values of the Ellipse Area (AE), the COP length (LCOP), the Mean of the Force (MF), the left forefoot force (FAS), the right forefoot force (FAD), strength on the left hind-foot (FRS), Strength on the right hind-foot (FRD) in different situations (a bipedal stance with the eyes open (ABOA), bipedal stance with the eyes closed (ABOCA), sporting gesture with the eyes open (GSOA), sporting gesture with the eyes closed (GSOC) in each course.
- 2) To compare the values between the first and the eighth course in order to identify significant differences related to the intensive study of classical ballet.

The results have provided the following:

- Description through tables containing the average values, standard deviation and coefficient of variation;
- Layout of the synthesis charts;
- Inferential analysis of the data.
- ✓ Comparison of the average values (AE, LCOP, MF, FAS, FAD, FRS, FRD) through Students' two-tailed t test for independent data with a significance alpha level = 5% in the group of the first course in different situations.
- ✓ Comparison of the average values (AE, LCOP, MF, FAS, FAD, FRS, FRD) through Students' two-tailed t test for independent data with significance alpha level = 5% within the group during the eighth course in different situations.
- ✓ Comparison of the average values (AE, LCOP, MF, FAS, FAD, FRS, FRD) through Students' two-tailed t test for independent data with significance alpha level = 5% between the two groups (first course and eighth course) for each of the 4 situations (bipedal stance with open eyes, bipedal stance with closed eyes, sport gesture with open eyes and sport gesture with closed eyes).

The hypotheses of the statistical analysis, with regard to the comparisons within each group, have been the following ones:

- ✓ Null hypothesis H0: $\mu' = \mu''$ (the average value of the size in the first course equals the average value of the same size in the second course)
- ✓ Alternative hypothesis H1: $\mu' \neq \mu''$ (the average value of the size in the first course differs the average value of the same size in the second course)

For the comparisons among the groups, they have been:

- I. Null hypothesis H0: $\mu' = \mu''$ (the average value of the size in the first course equals the average spine blades
- II. value of the same size in the second course)
- ✓ Alternative hypothesis H1: $\mu' \neq \mu''$ (the average value of the size in the first course differs the average value of the same size in the second course)
- ✓ The data of the two samples are different because they refer to different students. It has been chosen the two-tailed test because values are not expected to increase or decrease a priori, meaning that any significant change can be increasing or decreasing.

III. SAMPLE

The research has been carried out on a survey of 31 students of the Ballet School of the San Carlo Theatre, of whom 23 students (aged between 10 and 11) belonged to the first course, and 11 students (aged between 17 and 20) attended the seventh and eighth

courses. Twenty-three students of the first course have been studied (eight males and fifteen females) with an average age of about 11,2 years.

With regard to the seventh and eighth courses, eleven students have been studied (three males and eight females), with an average age of about 18,9 years.

IV. INSTRUMENTS

The group of research carried out a **Stabilometric and Posturometric Examination** on the group of control. The evaluation has been performed with a postural **MULTIFUNCTION MEASUREMENT PLATFORM, Zebris FDM 153X60.5X2.1 cm (L x W x H), which works with 8064 capacitive sensors arranged in a next-generation matrix of 144 by 56 cm.**

This platform provides a method that **measures the distribution of plantar pressure** in the upright position, during both the **static phase** (position of attention) and **walking**, providing *graphical* images and *numerical values*. The examination is carried out to identify the shape, the pressure, the surface, the acceleration of the foot and ground contact time to better assess any abnormal movement and areas of overload. The study of the posture and the gait highlights how the load distribution on the plantar surface may vary according to the structural characteristics of the subject and how it can be influenced by possible alterations of different bone segments (tarsus and metatarsus, tibia, femur, pelvis).

The application areas cover a quick and simple dynamic analysis of the rolling and a static analysis of the distribution of loads. This analysis can easily be used to determine the functionality of the foot because:

- It can register an unlimited number of tests and the calculation of the average value will automatically appear in the "Report".
- The system records the ground reaction forces during the foot-ground contact.
- The development of the load distribution can be displayed in 2 and 3 dimensions charts and in a color scale.
- Up to 4 simultaneous tracks facilitate the direct comparison between the left and the right side and the comparative analysis in terms of interest.
- It allows the analysis of static and dynamic forces and of the pressure distribution of the foot.
- It records the ground reaction forces during the foot-ground contact.

The protocol provided a Plumb test, a bipodalic Romberg test and a test of the sport gesture for the first year course students; it carried out a Plumb test and a bipodalic Romberg test, and a Plumb test and a monopodalic Romberg test and a test of the sport gesture for the students of the seventh and eighth year courses. (Lanski 2000).

V. RESEARCH PLAN

a) *Time, subjects and methods of implementation of the protocol:*

The subject was positioned to evaluate the static standing position *without shoes*, with only the socks on.

i. *Tests*

Plumb test and a bipodalic Romberg test

1. head in neutral position with eyes to infinity (no staring point: drawings, etc.)
2. upper limbs lowered and along the trunk and thighs
3. aligned feet, tips slightly apart, heels almost together
4. the person is not allowed to speak or make any voluntary movement during the test.
5. it always begins with open eyes, then, it goes on with the eyes closed.

Plumb test and a monopodalic Romberg test

1. head in neutral position with eyes to infinity (no staring point: drawings, etc.)
2. arms crossed in the chest;
3. the supporting leg is bent of about 30 degrees and the other is slightly bent;
4. the person is not allowed to speak or make any voluntary movement during the test.
5. it always begins with open eyes, then, it goes on with the eyes closed.

Test of the technical movement:

1. head in neutral position with eyes to infinity (no staring point: drawings, etc.)
2. upper limbs lowered and along the trunk and thighs
3. getting the first "en de hors" position with the with heels jointed and the points of the toes turned 180 degrees.
4. the person is not allowed to speak or make any voluntary movement during the test.
5. it always begins with open eyes, then, it goes on with the eyes closed.

ii. *Duration of the test*

The literature generally indicates that the length of the test is *30" both with the eyes open and closed for the bipodalic stance test and 10" both with the eyes open and closed for the monopodalic stance test.* The team of the researchers, considered the main technical features of the courses attended by the students, decided to do the following doses:

First course students:

The following four doses have been given:

- The first one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in bi-podalic position and with open eyes;

- The second one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in bi-podalic position and with the eyes closed;
- The third one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in sports mode with open eyes;
- The fourth one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in sports mode with the eyes closed;

Seventh and eighth courses students:

The following four doses have been given:

- The first one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in bi-podalic position and with open eyes;
- The second one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in bi-podalic position and with closed eyes;
- The third one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in sports mode with open eyes;
- The fourth one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in sports mode with the eyes closed;
- The fifth one i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in monopodalic position and with open eyes;
- The second one, at T0 time, i.e. before the lesson and at the beginning of the course, in monopodalic position and with closed eyes;

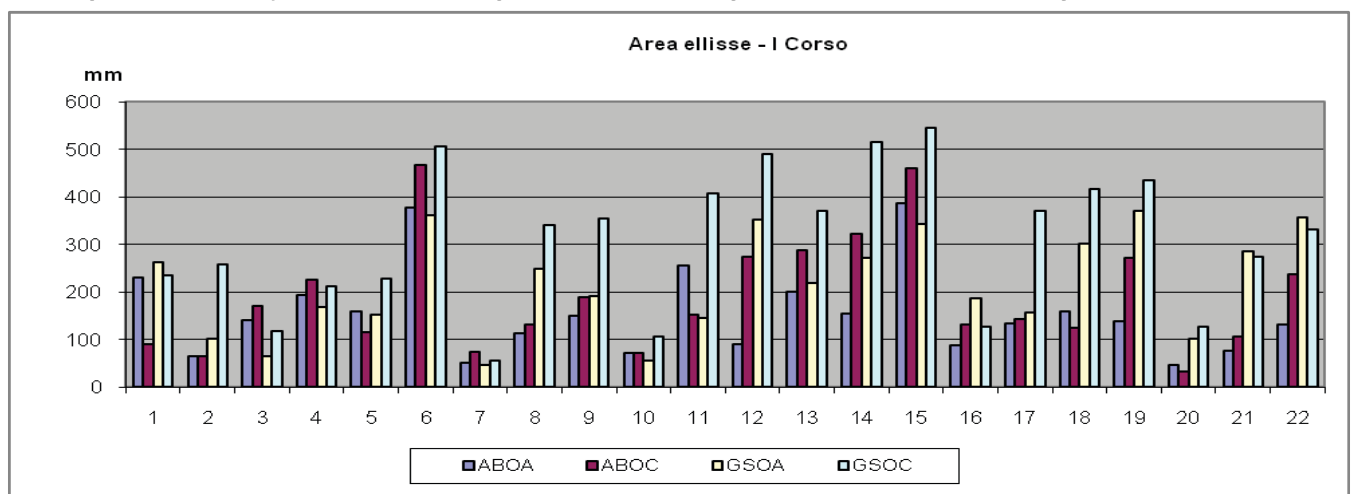
VI. EMERGED DATA

I Course

1. It has been recorded a progressive increase of the Area of Ellipse and of the COP length, while passing from the bipodalic stance to the technical gesture and, in each case, while moving from the open eyes position to the closed eyes position.

I course

Histograms of the Ellipse Area, COP Length, Left Forefoot, Right Forefoot, Left foot and Right Hind-foot variables

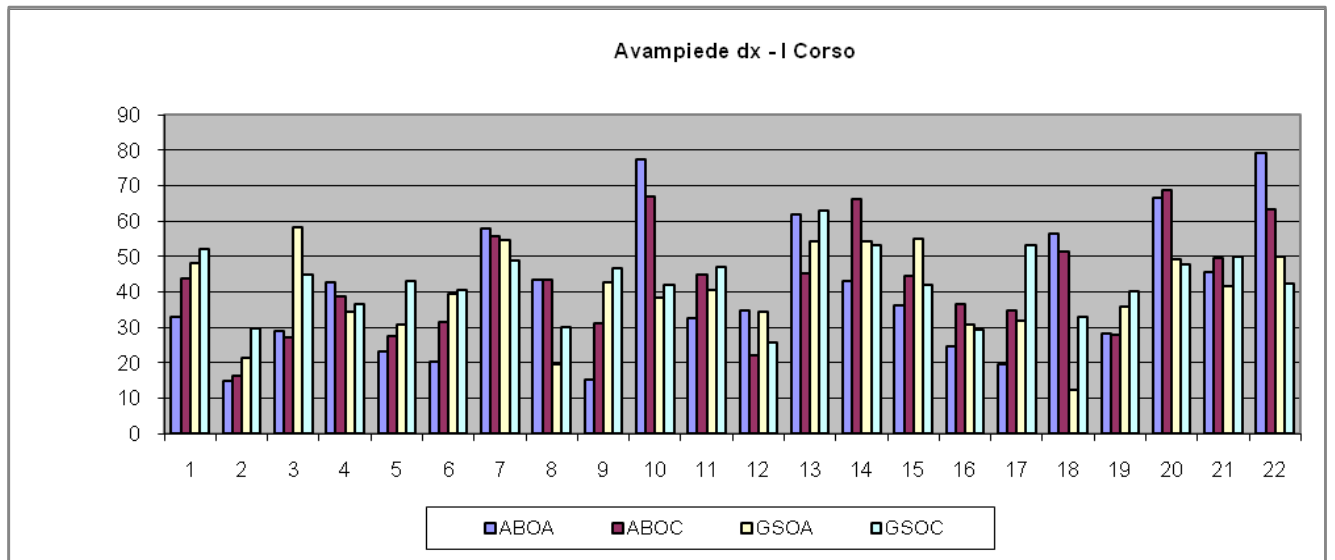
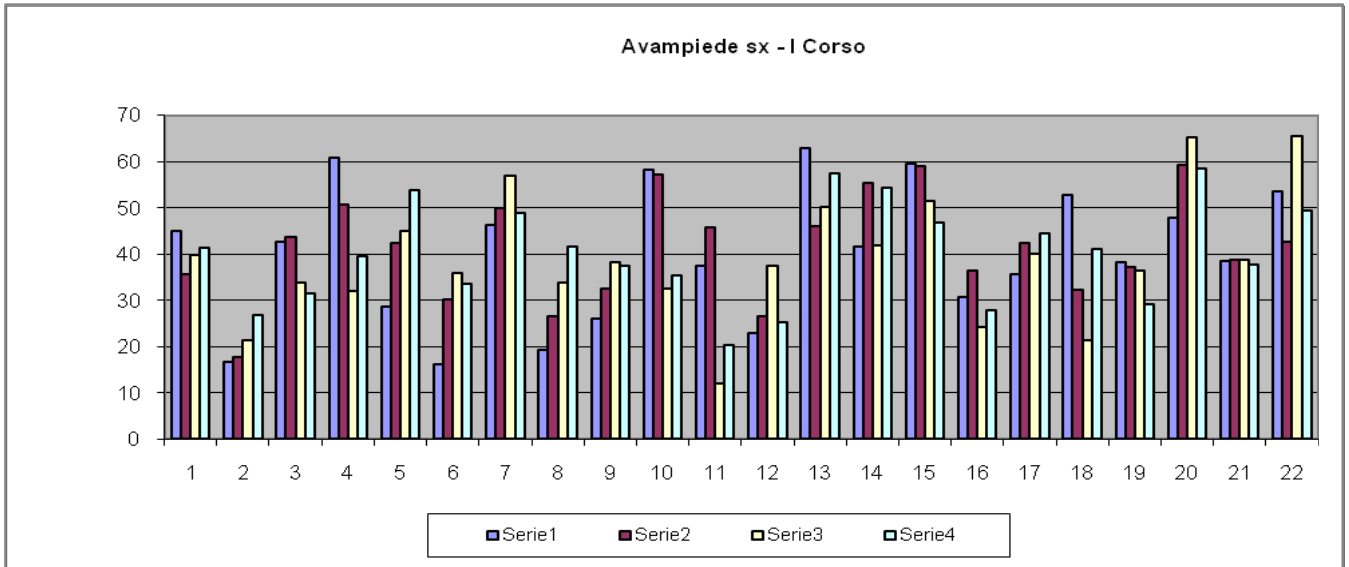
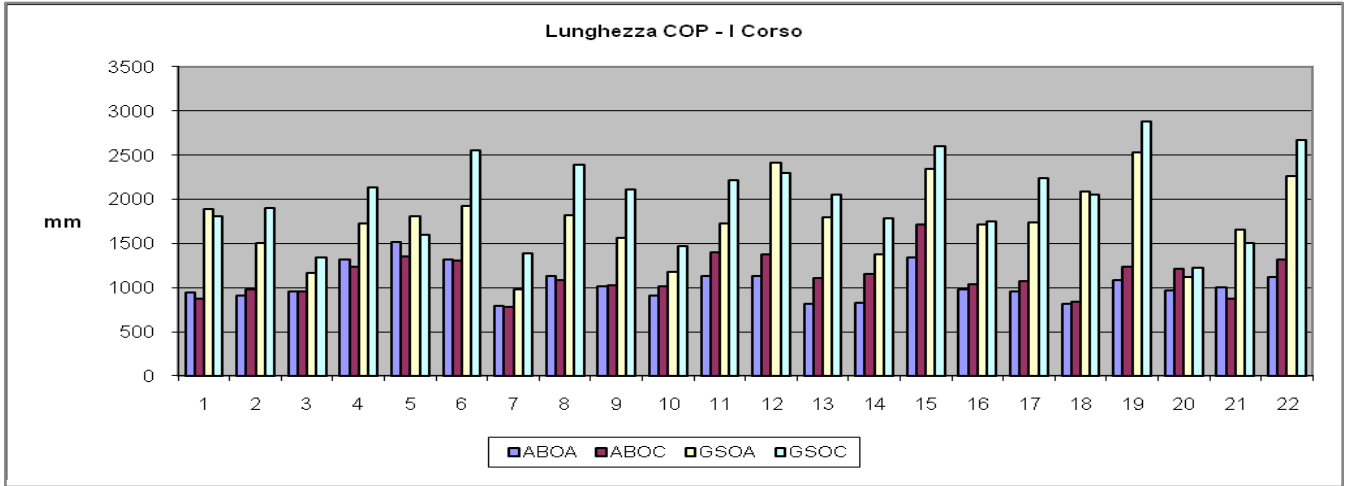


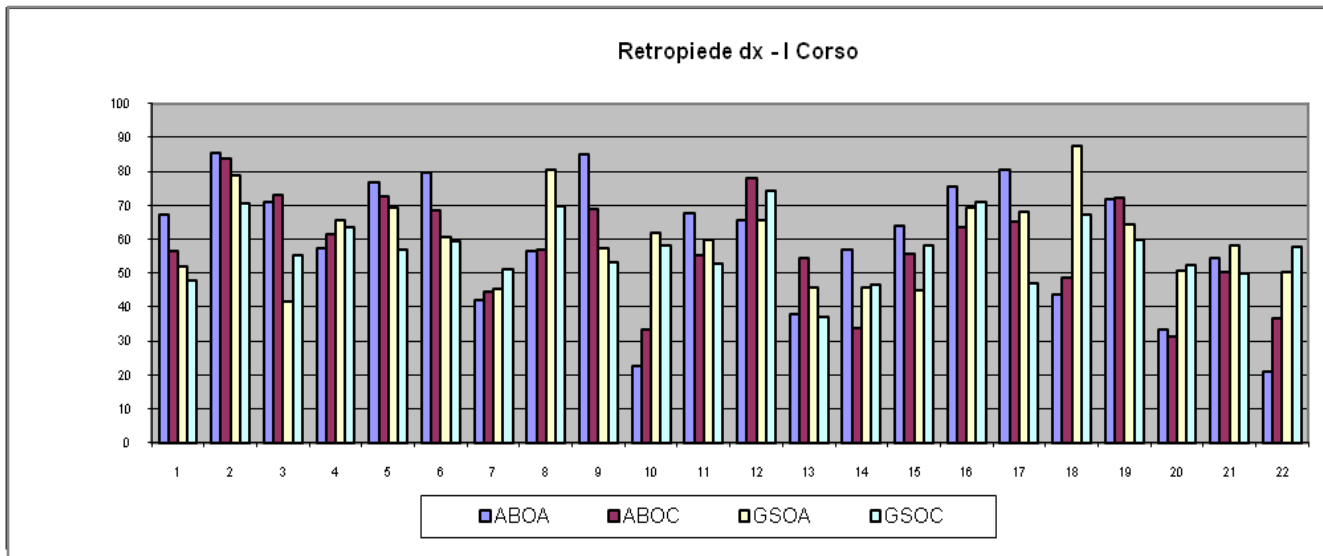
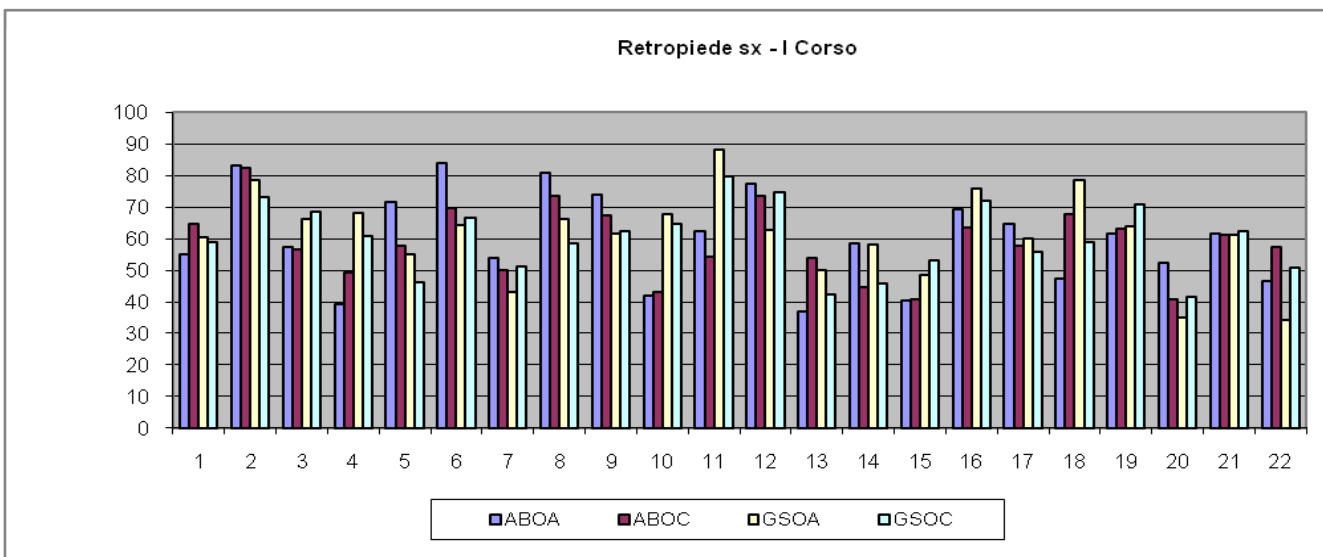
2. The force on the forefoot and the hind-foot is almost constant in each of the four cases.
3. The forces are always balanced on the left and right forefoot and on the left and right hind-foot.
4. The support on the hind-foot is higher than that on the forefoot.
5. The average support forces are steady on each of the four points (left and right forefoot and on the left and right hind-foot).
6. The values of the force on the left foot (forefoot and hind-foot) are highly concentrated around the mean value of the sport gesture with closed eyes. It shows a low variability of the behavior.

VIII Course

1. There have been recorded fixed values of the Area of the Ellipse and a progressive increase of the COP length while moving from the open to the closed eyes position and from the stance to the sport gesture.
2. The strength on the forefoot tends to strongly decrease while moving from a bipodalic stance to a sport gesture; of course, vice versa for the hind-foot.
3. The forces are always balanced on the left and right forefoot and on the left and right hind-foot.
4. The support on the forefoot is higher than that on the hind-foot.
5. The support on the forefoot generally increases with the eyes closed and decreases during the sport activity related to the bipodalic support; of course, vice versa for the hind-foot.
6. The values of the force on the left foot (forefoot and hind-foot) during the sport gesture with the eyes closed are closer to the average value; that means a low variability and, hence, a regular behavior.

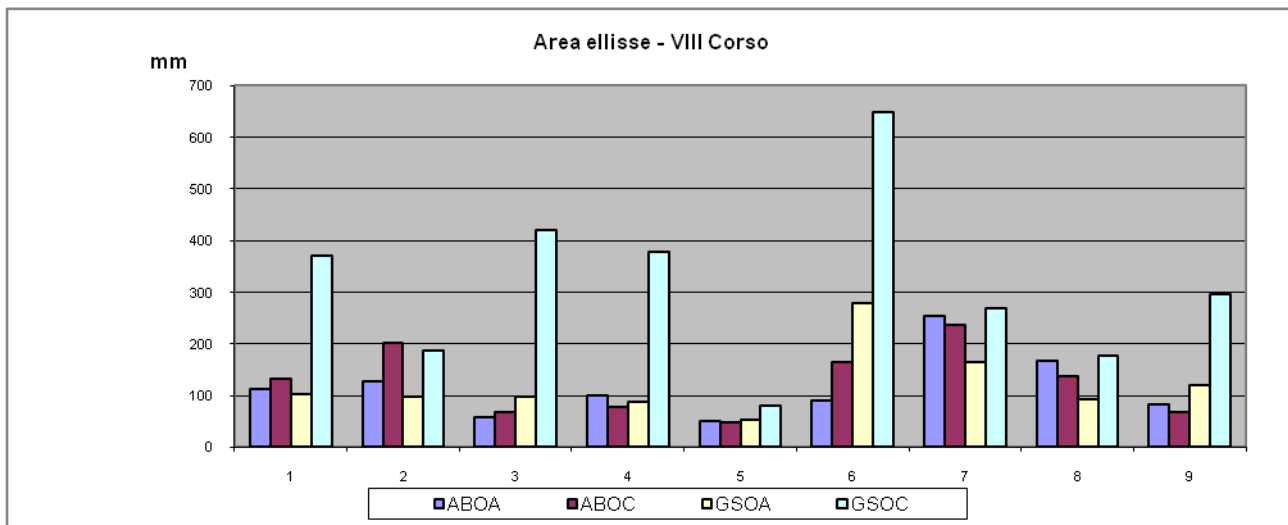
VII. RESULTS

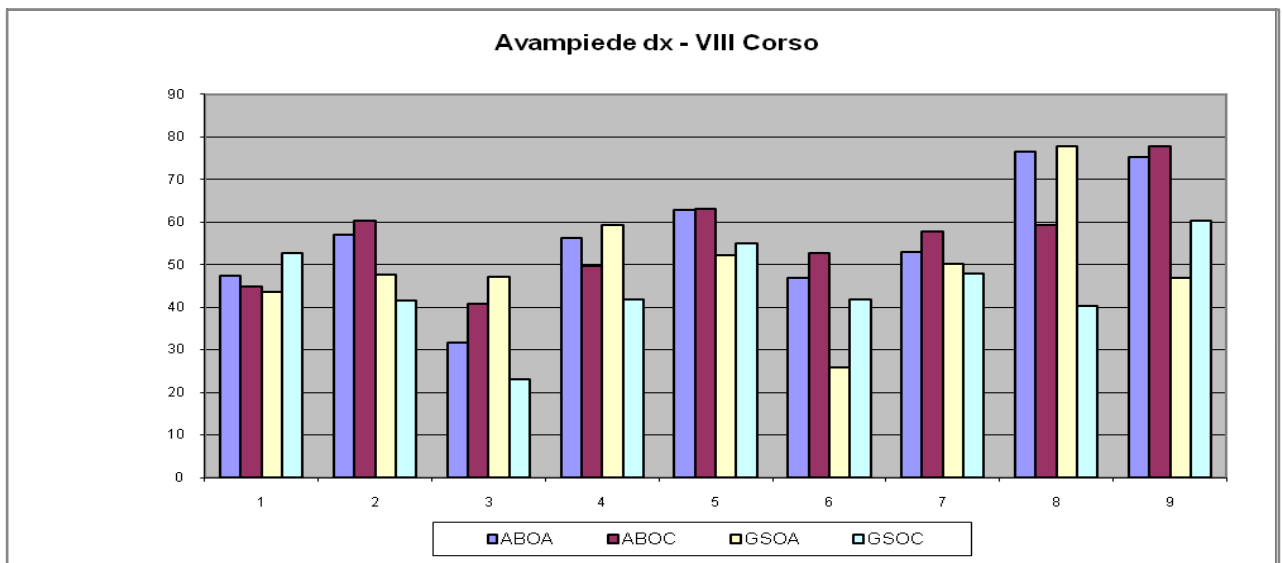
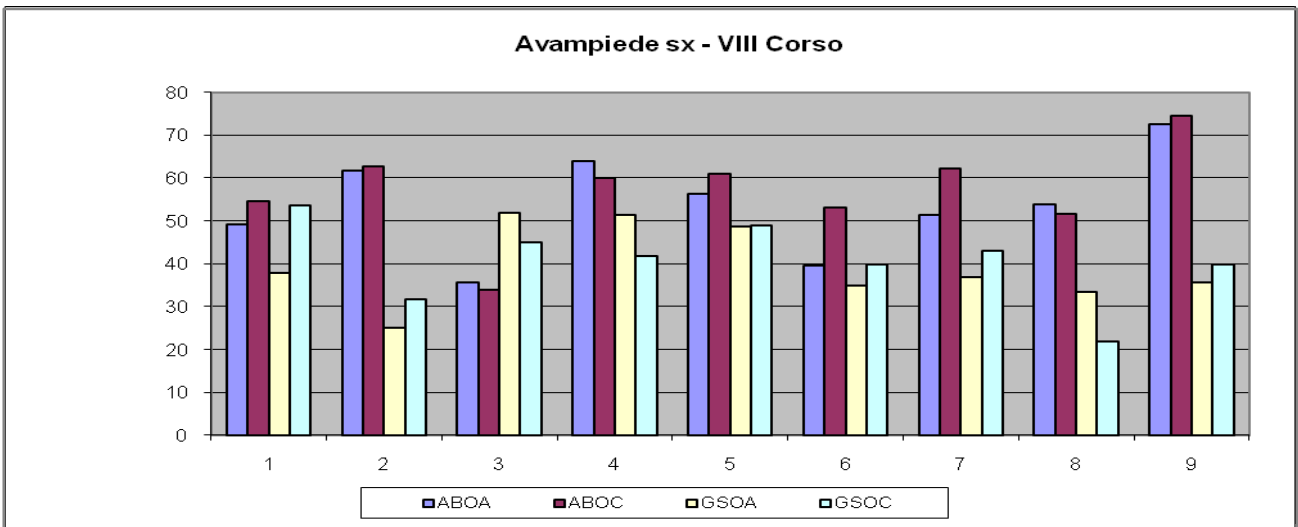
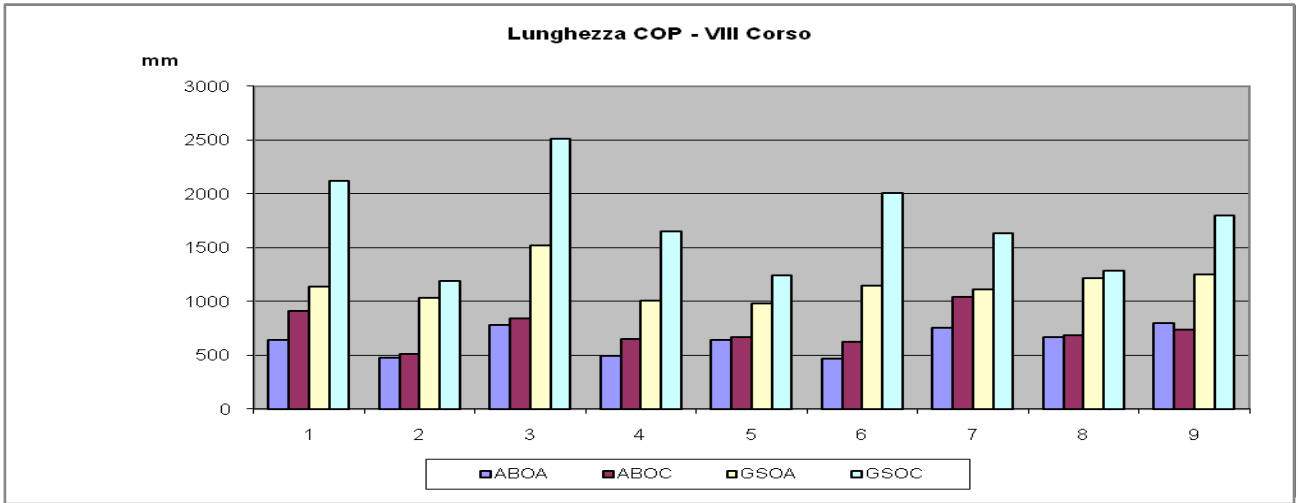


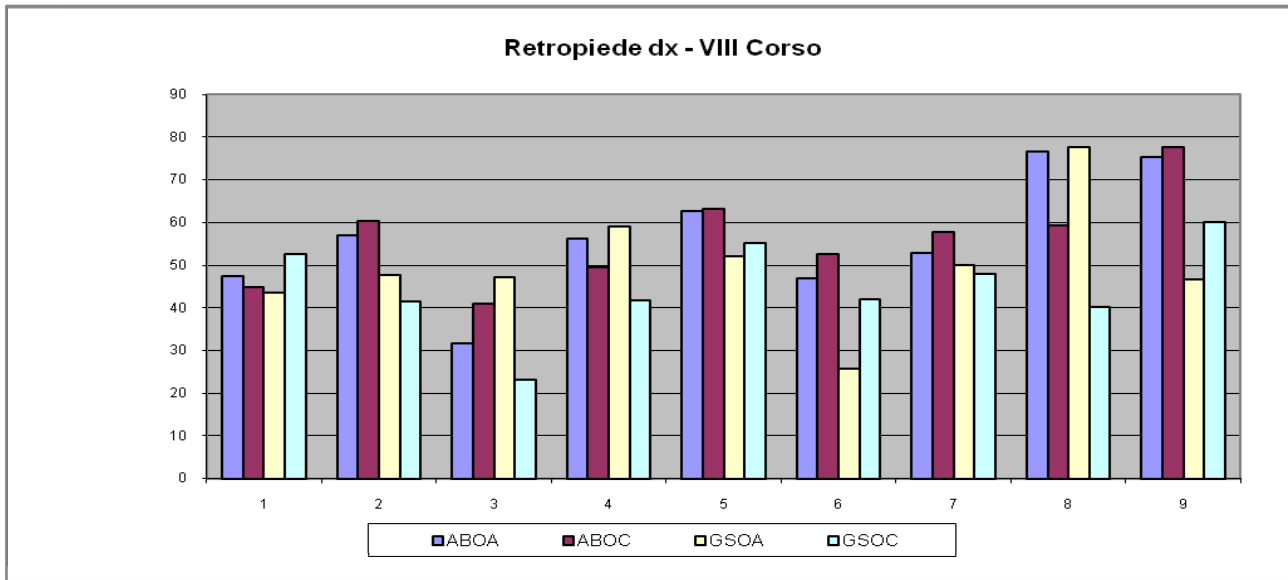
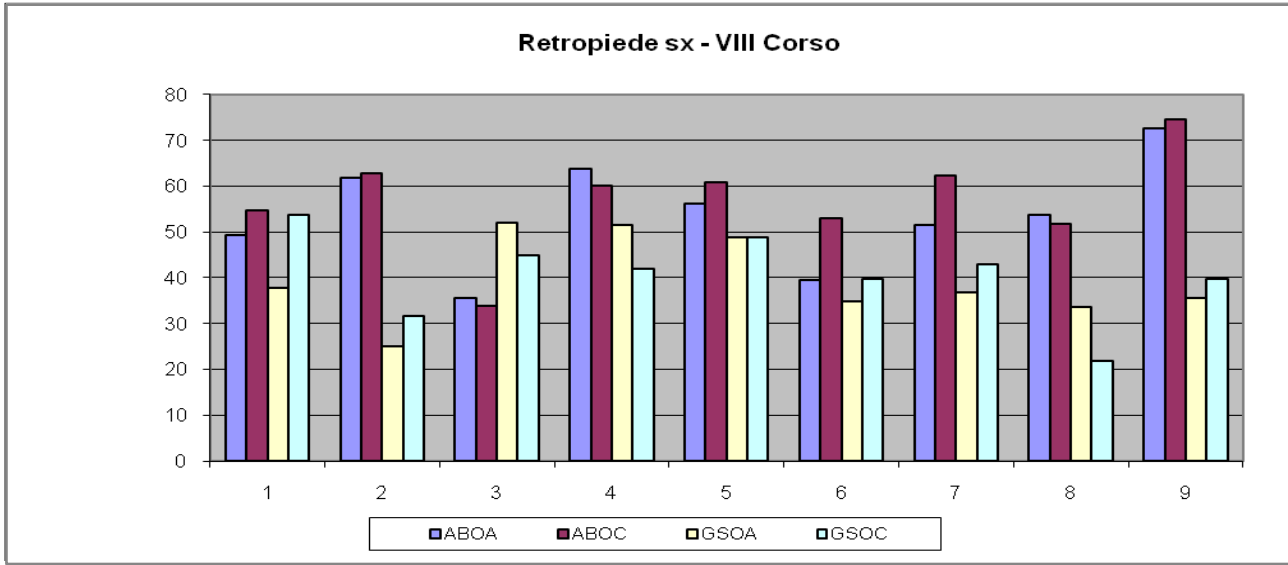


VIII course

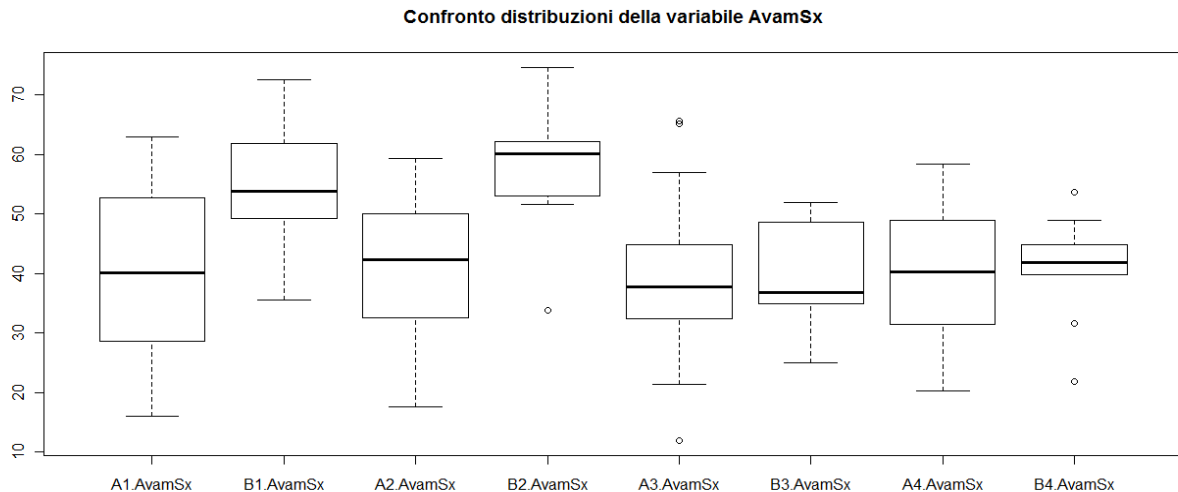
Histograms of the Ellipse Area, COP Length, Left Forefoot, Right Forefoot, Left foot and Right Hind-foot variables





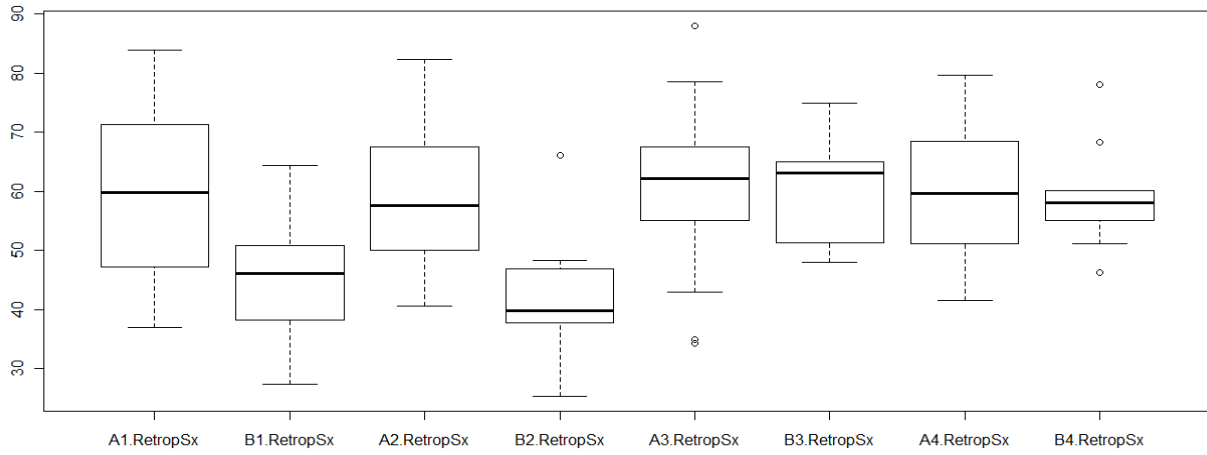


BOXPLOT OF THE AVAMSX, AVAMDx, RETROPSX AND RETROPDx VARIABLES

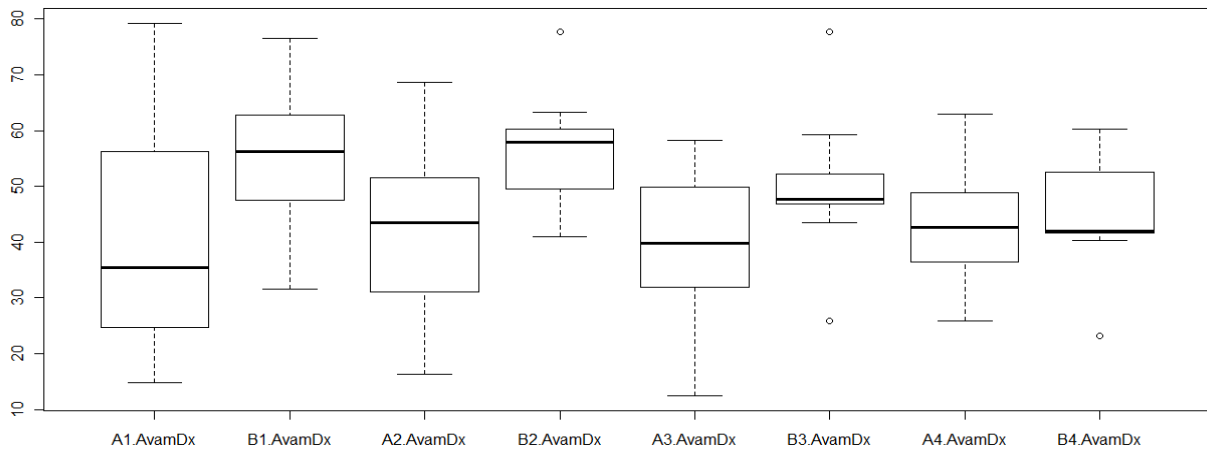




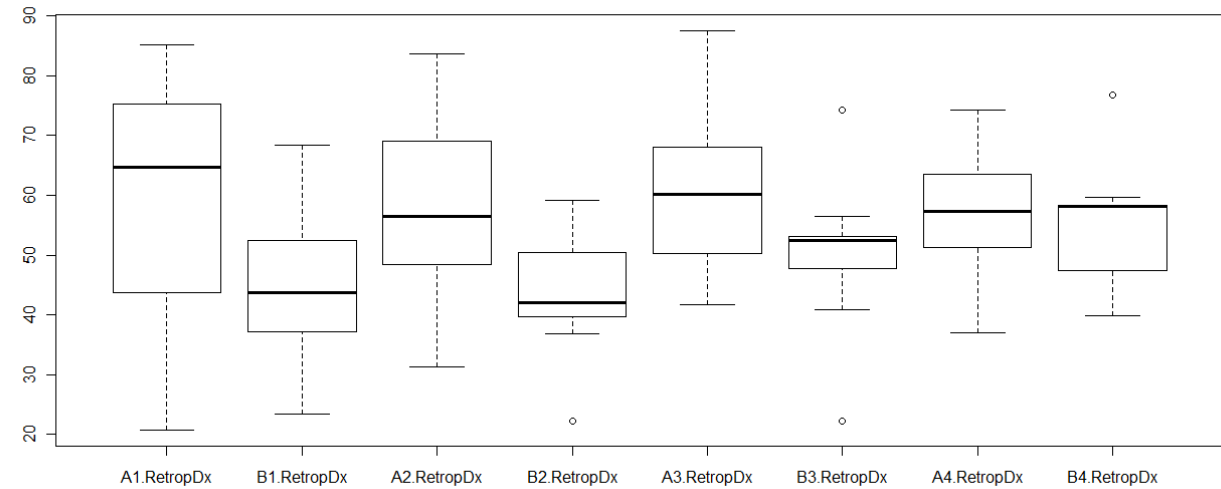
Confronto distribuzioni della variabile RetropSx



Confronto distribuzioni della variabile AvamDx



Confronto distribuzioni della variabile RetropDx



Key:

A = I Course

B= VIII Course

Comparing the values of the first course with those of the eighth course and analysing the following table of the p. values, it can be stated the following:

1. There are no significant differences between the first course and the eighth one with regard to the Area of the Ellipse (AE) and the mean of the forces (MF) both on the left and the right foot. This is true for the bipodalic support both with the open and the closed eyes. Hence, the attendance in the courses doesn't significantly modify the AE and the MF.
2. The length of the COP is different in the first and eighth course as regard as the support both with open and closed eyes, and the difference goes beyond the 99,9% (i.e., there is less than 0,1% probability to make mistake in admitting that the values are different). The study carried out in the following eight years of the course significantly changes the length of the COP..
3. During the bipodalic support with open eyes, between the first and the eighth course there are significant differences at 95% for both the forefoot and the hindfoot, and in both cases both for the left and the right foot (there is less than 5% probability to make a mistake if it is assumed that the values are different).
4. During the bipodalic support with open eyes, between the first and the eighth course there are significant differences at 95% for both the right forefoot and the right hind-foot.
5. During the bipodalic support with closed eyes, between the first and the eighth course there are significant differences at 99% for both the left forefoot and the left hind-foot (in this case, there is less than 1% probability to make a mistake if it is assumed that the values are different).
6. The influence of the study carried out during the following eight years of the course, involves more significant changes on the left foot rather than on the right one.
7. There aren't significant changes ($p_value > 0,05$) during the technical activity with the eyes closed.
8. During the technical activity with the eyes open, there aren't significant changes with regard to MF and the forces both on the left and right forefoot and hind-foot.
9. During the technical activity with open eyes, there is a significant change at 95% with regard to the Area of the Ellipse between the first and the eighth courses.
10. During the technical activity with the eyes open, there is a significant change at 99% with regard to the length of the COP between the first and the eighth courses.
11. The length of the COP of the male students of the eighth course is shorter than that of the female students.

P_Value Tables To Compare The Values Between The I Course And The Viii Course

Bipodalic Stance with Open Eye

<i>size</i>	<i>means</i>	<i>p.value</i>
AE	The same (both with open and closed eyes)	0.25
MF (sx e dx)	The same (both with open and closed eyes)	0.77
Lungh. COP	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	<0.001
AvSx	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	0.018
AvDx	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	0.031
RpSx	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	0.018
RpDx	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	0.031

Bipodalic Stance with Closed Eyes

<i>size</i>	<i>means</i>	<i>p.value</i>
AE	The same (both with open and closed eyes)	0.15
MF (sx e dx)	The same (both with open and closed eyes)	0.77
Lungh. COP	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	<0.001
AvSx	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	<0.01
AvDx	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	0.02
RpSx	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	<0.01
RpDx	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	0.02

Sport Activity with Open Eyes

<i>size</i>	<i>means</i>	<i>p.value</i>
AE	Different	0.02
MF (sx e dx)	Different (both with open and closed eyes)	0.73
Lungh. COP	The same	<0.001
AvSx	The same	0.88
AvDx	The same	0.06
RpSx	The same	0.88
RpDx	The same	0.06

Sport Activity with Closed Eyes

<i>size</i>	<i>means</i>	<i>p.value</i>
AE	Not Comparable Data Because Of The Different Variance Of The Data	-----
MF (sx e dx)	The same	0.083
Lungh. COP	The same	0.13
AvSx	The same	0.90
AvDx	The same	0.57
RpSx	The same	0.90
RpDx	The same	0.57

VIII. CLUSTERING

According to the general features of the stances, it has been possible to split the students of the first group into subgroups with a 30 distance in each of the four cases:

Bipodalic Stance with Open Eyes

	AvamSx	AvamDx	RetropSx	RetropDx
Cluster 1	53.6	66.5	46.5	33.5
Cluster 2	45.5	36.3	54.5	63.7
Cluster 3	24.5	24.5	75.5	75.5

Bipodalic Stance with Closed Eyes

	AvamSx	AvamDx	RetropSx	RetropDx
Cluster 1	52.9	64.1	47.1	35.9
Cluster 2	50.4	43.3	49.6	56.7
Cluster 3	37.8	31.0	62.2	69.0
Cluster 4	33.3	47.0	66.7	53.0

Sport Activity with Open Eyes

	AvamSx	AvamDx	RetropSx	RetropDx
Cluster 1	37.6	40.8	62.4	59.2
Cluster 2	37.6	40.8	62.4	59.2
Cluster 3	22.6	24.88	77.4	75.2

Sport Activity with Closed Eyes

	AvamSx	AvamDx	RetropSx	RetropDx
Cluster 1	51.9	46.2	48.1	53.8
Cluster 2	40.7	33.1	59.3	66.9
Cluster 3	32.4	41.8	67.6	58.2
Cluster 4	40.2	50.2	59.8	49.5
Cluster 5	26.6	28.2	73.4	71.8

IX. CORRELATIONS

The following important correlations have been identified:

- A high force on the left forefoot implies a high force on the right forefoot and vice versa, a low force on the right and left hindfoot, particularly in the case of the bipodalic stance.
- Increasing the length of the COP increases the Area of the Ellipse, particularly during the sport activity.

X. CONCLUSION

The survey meant to examine the relationship between the technique of the classical ballet and the possible appearance of abnormalities of the plantar support and the possible effects of these changes on the posture. The survey also meant to highlight every significant difference between the plantar support of both the female and male students. It should be clear, indeed, that the female dancer does greater efforts due to the technical features and to the pointe shoes, which expose her not only to frequent and sudden injuries; moreover, their use may also cause dysmorphism and foot pains, poor load distribution and support, with effects borne by the spine and the lower limbs.

The results showed:

- ✓ In the first year students, the support on the hind-foot is greater than that on the forefoot, while the eighth year students stand more on the forefoot than on the hind-foot. This might mean that the constant study would tend to encourage an adequately distributed support over the whole foot.

- ✓ In the eighth year students the force on the forefoot tends to strongly reduce while going from the bipodalic support to the sport gesture (and vice versa on the hind-foot). This might mean that the *en dehors* study improves an adequately distributed support over the whole foot.
- ✓ The length of the COP is different in the first and eighth course (both for the open and closed eyes support) and the difference is beyond 99,9% (i.e. there is a probability of less than 0,1% to make mistake if it is assumed that the values are different). The study carried out during the following eight years of the course changes the length of the COP very significantly, improving a lot the centre of gravity of the studied subjects.
- ✓ The influence of the study carried out during the eight year course shows greater changes on the left foot rather than on the right one. This might be due to the fact that the activities tend to favour the use of both the parties of the body in a symmetrical way, while performing all the routine activities.
- ✓ During the sport gesture with open eyes there is a significant differences at 95% with regard to the Area of the Ellipse of the first and eight year course and this might mean that the influence of the study done during the eight years of the course implies changes on the motor control abilities.

The results of the survey highlighted, indeed, a possible relationship between the motor activity of the ballet and the features of the support on the foot. The research opens up further studies on the *modelling* and *characterizing* features of the practice of the academic ballet technique, because the quality of the body's movement, even in the air phase, depends on the control and on the refinement of the support of the lower limb.

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ⁱ For further details about the research methodology of the interview process, please see Oliveira (2005).

ⁱⁱ Adapted from Oliveira (2005: 43) and Oliveira (2007: 66).

ⁱⁱⁱ For further detail see Light and Gold (2000).

^{iv} This figure is contrasts particularly with Indian entrepreneurs interviewed in the same study. Almost 30% of Indian entrepreneurs (of 253 interviewed) declared that one of the most relevant difficulties in the definition of entrepreneurial strategies was constraints in accessing bank loans (for further details about this comparative analysis, see Oliveira 2005: 82).

^v For examples of other host contexts for Chinese entrepreneurs, see: Chan and Cheung (1985: 149), Beltrán and Sáiz (2007: 211).

^{vi} See: *Jornal de Notícias*, 28 June 2006.

^{vii} Details in: *Diário de Notícias*, 12 April 2006.

^{viii} About 64.7% of Chinese entrepreneurs interviewed declared that they had only Portuguese clients (Oliveira, 2005: 117).

^{ix} For further details, see: Chan and Cheung (1985:149), Waldinger et al. (1990: 142) and Light and Gold (2000: 119).

^x See: Chan and Cheung, (1985:149), Portes (1999:58).