Body Image Perceptions Among Dancers and Non-Dancers

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Abstract

Body image perception is the subjective experience of the body, which includes thoughts, feelings, and attitudes about one's own body and its appearance. It involves how individuals perceive their physical self in relation to their ideal body and to societal standards, and it can be influenced by various psychological, social, and cultural factors. This study aimed to compare body image perceptions between dancers and non-dancers. Using a cross-sectional comparative design, the researcher surveyed 111 non-dancers and 75 dancers through simple random sampling, employing the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) to measure body image. One-way ANOVA demonstrated a statistically significant difference in Body Image Perception (BIP) scores between dancers and non-dancers. Gender and educational qualification were found to have no significant difference with body image perception. The results suggest that dancers perceive their body image more positively and with less variability compared to non-dancers. These findings underscore the potential benefits of dance activities in promoting positive body image. Future research should explore the causal mechanisms and specific elements of dance contributing to this effect. The implications of these results suggest that integrating dance into interventions could enhance body image and well-being.

Keywords: Body image, dancers, non-dancers, Body Appreciation Scale

I. INTRODUCTION

Among various groups, dancers have been particularly scrutinized due to the stringent physical and aesthetic demands of their profession, which can amplify body image concerns (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). Body image, a multifaceted construct encompassing an individual's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about their physical appearance, has garnered significant attention in psychological research due to its profound impact on mental health and well-being. The contemporary societal emphasis on physical appearance often exacerbates body dissatisfaction, leading to a range of psychological issues such as low self-esteem, depression, and eating disorders (Cash & Smolak, 2011).

Research has shown that dancers often exhibit higher levels of body surveillance and dissatisfaction compared to non-dancers, which can adversely affect their mental health and performance (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006). Numerous studies have highlighted the role of media in shaping body image perceptions. Exposure to idealized body images in media is linked to increased body dissatisfaction, especially among women (Grabe et al. 2008). This phenomenon is not restricted to the general population; dancers, due to their constant engagement with body-centric activities, may experience heightened sensitivity to body image ideals (Desmond, 1997). This intense focus on the body can lead to

significant pressure to conform to unrealistic body standards, contributing to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating behaviors (Groesz et al. 2002).

The discipline of dance requires continuous physical scrutiny and comparison with peers, which can further exacerbate body image issues (Foster, 1986). The intersection of body image and dance is particularly noteworthy. Dancers are frequently evaluated based on their physical appearance, and the culture within many dance communities often emphasizes thinness and aesthetic perfection (Burt, 1995).

Objectives:

1. To determine if there is a difference in body image perceptions between dancers and non-dancers

2. To determine if there is a difference in body image perceptions between males and females.

3. To determine if there is a difference in body image perceptions between undergraduate and graduate students.

Hypotheses:

1.The body image perceptions of dancers significantly differ from those of non-dancers.

2.The body image perceptions of males are significantly different from those of females.

3.The body image perceptions of undergraduate are significantly different from those of post graduate.

II. METHOD

2.1 Participants of the study

The participants for this study consist of 186 participants (126 females and 60 males). They were total 111 non-dancers and 75 dancers. The participants were selected randomly, where their age range from 18 to 30. The participants occupation varied as 98 unemployed and 88 employed participants. The educational qualification included 61 under-graduates and 125 post-graduates. The table 1 show the demographic characteristics of participants.

Table 1 Characteristics of participants in the study

Demographic Details	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	126	68
	Male	60	32
Dancer or non-Dancers	Non-Dancers	111	60
	Dancers	75	40
Occupation	Unemployed	98	53
	Employed	88	48
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	61	33
	Post-Graduate	125	67

2.2 Instrument

The Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) by Tracy L. Tylka and Nichole M. Wood-Barcalow

The 10-item Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) assesses individuals' acceptance of, favorable opinions toward, and respect for their bodies. It closely represents current knowledge on positive body image.

Scoring: The final version of the BAS consists of 13 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always." For each item, the following response scale should be used: 1 = Never, 2 =

Seldom, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 =Always. The average participants' responses to Items 1–10 is the total score of body image perception.

Reliability and Validity: The BAS exhibits high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically exceeding 0.90 across various studies, indicating that the items within the scale consistently measure the construct of body appreciation. Test-retest reliability has also been shown to be strong, suggesting that the scale provides stable measurements over time. In terms of validity, the BAS has shown good convergent validity, correlating positively with other measures of positive body image and self-esteem, and negatively with measures of body dissatisfaction and internalization of thin ideals. Construct validity has been established through factor analyses, which support the unidimensional structure of the scale. Additionally, the BAS has demonstrated discriminant validity by showing weaker correlations with unrelated constructs, such as neuroticism and social desirability, further confirming that it specifically measures body appreciation rather than general psychological well-being or response biases.

2.3 Procedure

The data collection process involved the administration of survey questionnaires through Google Forms. Simple random sampling was utilized to select participants. In simple random sampling, the selection of everyone is entirely random, and each member of the population has an equal probability of being chosen.

Following data collection, normality was tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was employed through which the researcher can concluded that the BIP scores are approximately normally distributed. Subsequently, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine the differences in body image between dancers and non-dancers and other variables of gender and educational qualification.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A research project's analysis of results is essential because it provides important insights into the collected data and makes the goals of the study more understandable. As this study focuses on how participation in dance activities influence body image perception among dancers and non-dancers, analyzing the data is an essential first step in determining how self-compassion affects happiness in relationships.

Table 2: Test for normality of the data

Kolmogorov-Smirnov			
	Statistic	Difference	Significance
BIP	0.51	186	.200*

*p<0.05

In the Kolmogorov-Smirnov the p-value (0.200) is greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant evidence to suggest that the distribution of BIP scores differs from a normal distribution. Therefore, the researcher can conclude that the BIP scores are approximately normally distributed.

Table 3: F value of the variable body image perception among dancers and non-dancers

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	148.991	1	148.991	4.373*

Within Groups	6268.734	184	34.069	
Total	6417.726	185		

*p<0.05

The ANOVA results in Table 3 provide an analysis of variance for the Body Image Perception (BIP) scores between dancers and non-dancers. The between-groups sum of squares is 148.991 with 1 degree of freedom, leading to a mean square of 148.991. The within-groups sum of squares is 6268.734 with 184 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 34.069. The F-statistic is 4.373 with a corresponding p-value of 0.038. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, there is a statistically significant difference in BIP scores between dancers and non-dancers. This finding suggests that participation in dance activities is associated with different body image perceptions compared to those who do not engage in dance.

Table 4: F value of the variable body image perception between gender groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	124.476	1	124.476	3.639
Within Groups	6293.250	184	34.202	
Total	6417.726	185		

The ANOVA results in Table 4 analyze the Body Image Perception (BIP) scores between different genders. The between-groups sum of squares is 124.476 with 1 degree of freedom, leading to a mean square of 124.476. The within-groups sum of squares is 6293.250 with 184 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 34.202. The F-statistic is 3.639 with a corresponding p-value of 0.058. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in BIP scores between different genders. This suggests that gender does not significantly affect body image perceptions in this sample.

Table 5: F value of the variable body image perception between educational qualification groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	1.396	1	1.396	.040
Within Groups	6416.330	184	34.871	
Total	6417.726	185		

The ANOVA results in Table 5 analyze the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) scores based on educational qualification. The between-groups sum of squares is 1.396 with 1 degree of freedom, leading to a mean square of 1.396. The within-groups sum of squares is 6416.330 with 184 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 34.871. The F-statistic is 0.040 with a corresponding p-value of 0.842. Since the p-value is significantly greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in BAS scores based on educational qualification. This suggests that educational qualification does not significantly affect body image perceptions in this sample.

Discussion

This study sought to explore the differences in body image perceptions between dancers and non-dancers, as well as to examine the potential influence of gender and educational qualifications on body image. The findings revealed that dancers generally possess a more positive body image compared to

non-dancers, as evidenced by the higher mean BIP scores among dancers. This supports the notion that engagement in dance activities, which often emphasize physical awareness and body aesthetics, can enhance body image appreciation (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006). Dancers are frequently involved in activities that promote body positivity and appreciation, such as expressive movements and physical conditioning, which may contribute to a healthier body image perception (Groesz et al., 2002).

The ANOVA results further confirmed that there is a statistically significant difference in BIP scores between dancers and non-dancers, with dancers showing higher body appreciation. This aligns with previous research that has demonstrated the positive impact of physical activities, particularly those involving body movement and expression, on body image (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006; Tiggemann & Slater, 2004). These findings suggest that dance activities may play a crucial role in fostering positive body image, which is essential for overall psychological well-being.

It might be because engaging in dance activities is associated with higher levels of self-esteem, better body satisfaction, and reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression. The physical activity involved in dance can reduce stress hormones and increase endorphins, contributing to overall psychological well-being. Additionally, dance can challenge and break down societal stereotypes and ideals about body types, promoting a more inclusive and accepting view of diverse body shapes and sizes and give individuals exposure to diverse dancers and body types can help individuals appreciate and accept their own bodies. Dance encourages mindfulness and being present in the moment, which can lead to a more positive and accepting attitude towards one's body. Engaging in dance can promote a balanced approach to physical, mental, and emotional health.

The study also examined the potential differences in body image perceptions based on gender. The ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant difference in BIP scores between different genders. This finding is somewhat surprising, given that much of the literature suggests that women are more likely to experience body dissatisfaction compared to men (Grabe et al, 2008). However, it is important to note that the sample size and composition may have influenced these results. It might be due to increasing awareness and discussion around body image issues that have highlighted that body image concerns affect all genders, leading to a more uniform perception across gender. Moreover, efforts to represent diverse body types and promote body positivity for all genders may have contributed to similar body image perceptions among men and women. Also, access to supportive environments and communities that promote positive body image for all genders might reduce gender-based differences. Furthermore, there might be significant variability within each gender that overshadows the differences between genders. For example, individual differences in personality, personal experiences, and coping mechanisms might play a more crucial role than gender alone. As well, increasing recognition of non-binary and gender-fluid identities might blur traditional gender distinctions in body image perceptions.

Previous studies have highlighted that gender differences in body image can be context-dependent and influenced by various factors such as cultural norms, media exposure, and personal experiences (Cash & Smolak, 2011). It is possible that the participants in this study, regardless of gender, share similar cultural and environmental influences that mitigate the expected gender differences in body image. Additionally, the increasing awareness and acceptance of diverse body types may contribute to more uniform body image perceptions across genders.

The analysis also sought to determine whether educational qualifications have any significant impact on body image perceptions. The results indicated no statistically significant difference in BIP scores based

on educational qualifications. This suggests that educational attainment does not significantly affect how individuals perceive and appreciate their bodies.

While educational qualifications can influence various aspects of an individual's life, including socioeconomic status and access to resources, it appears that body image perceptions are more strongly influenced by other factors, such as engagement in physical activities like dance (Desmond, 1997). This finding is consistent with the literature that emphasizes the role of physical activity and body-centric activities in shaping body image perceptions (Groesz et al. 2002). It can be because cultural attitudes towards body image can be strong and pervasive, impacting individuals similarly regardless of their education. Social interactions and peer influences play a significant role in shaping body image, often overriding the influence of educational attainment. Moreover, how individuals cope with body image issues may be more influenced by personal traits and support systems rather than their level of education. Also, formal education systems may not provide extensive education specifically focused on body image, leading to minimal differences between individuals with varying educational backgrounds. Furthermore, educational attainment primarily relates to academic and professional skills, which may not directly influence personal body image perceptions.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant differences in body image perceptions between dancers and non-dancers, with dancers exhibiting more positive and consistent body image scores. The statistical analyses reveal that participation in dance activities is associated with different body image perceptions compared to those who do not engage in dance. The findings suggest that engagement in dance activities positively influences body image, likely due to the enhanced body awareness and appreciation fostered through dance.

The variable of educational qualification was shown to have no significant difference in body image perception. This may be due to cultural attitudes towards body image which can be strong and pervasive, impacting individuals similarly regardless of their education.

The variable of gender was also shown to have no significant difference in body image perception. This can be because of increasing awareness and discussion around body image issues that have highlighted that body image concerns affect all genders, leading to a more uniform perception across gender.

However, it is important to note the limitations of this study, including the reliance on self-reported measures, unequal sample sizes, and the cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inferences.

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