

Assessing the differences between dancers and non-dancers in psychological well-being, quality of life, and perceived stress.

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Abstract

Dancing is a potent expressive medium that supports mental health and fosters a strong sense of self and other interpersonal connections. Through the joy of movement, it fosters creativity, mental resilience, and physical fitness. The study investigates differences in psychological well-being, quality of life, and perceived stress between dancers and non-dancers. It hypothesizes that dancers will exhibit higher psychological well-being and quality of life, along with lower perceived stress compared to non-dancers. A quantitative research design was employed. Data was collected through a Google Forms survey distributed to both dancers and non-dancers. The statistical analysis involved t-tests, and descriptive statistics conducted using Data Tab software. Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, and clear instructions. The hypothesis suggested that dancers will generally report higher psychological well-being and quality of life, along with lower levels of perceived stress compared to non-dancers.

Keywords - *psychological well being, quality of life, stress, dancers, non-dancers*

Introduction

Dance's importance lies in its ability to express oneself powerfully in a way that cuts across age, language, and culture. It enhances mental and physical health, stimulates creativity, and facilitates emotional connection. Dance is also an essential instrument for communicating stories, fostering ties within the community, and promoting cultural heritage. It improves social connection, emotional discharge, and self-esteem from a therapeutic perspective.

Indian dance has a long and illustrious history that stretches back more than 2,000 years, with strong roots in spirituality, mythology, and the arts. Rituals from temples and oral traditions gave rise to classical dance genres including Kathak, Odissi, and Bharatanatyam. Enacting stories from old books like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, these dance forms were closely associated with religious rituals. With the passage of centuries, Indian dance has continued to develop, keeping its cultural character while fusing tradition and modernity.



Definitions:

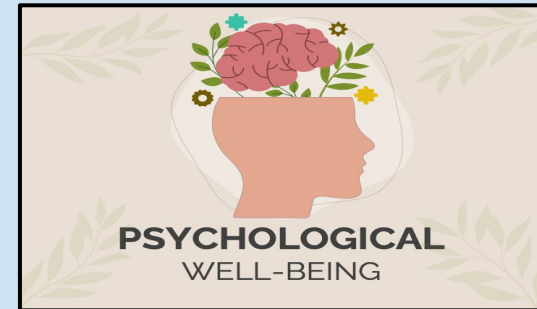
Definition of Quality of Life: This term describes a person's whole happiness and contentment in all facets of life, such as their physical and mental well-being, interpersonal connections, and personal surroundings. It shows how successfully someone may lead a comfortable life, work towards their own objectives, and partake in fulfilling activities. Contentment, happiness, and good physical and mental health are indicators of a great quality of life.



What Stress Is: Stress can be defined as the body's normal reaction to physical, emotional, or mental demands or difficulties from the outside world. It is the sensation of being overburdened or helpless in the face of demands. Stress that lasts a short while can spur action, but stress that lasts a long time or is chronically high damages the body and mind. In addition to bodily issues like headaches or exhaustion, symptoms include worry, irritability, trouble concentrating, and weariness.



Psychological well-being is the state of total emotional and mental health of an individual. It includes things like having a purpose in life, accepting oneself, and being able to keep up good connections. Positive mood, emotional equilibrium, resilience to adversity, and a feeling of purpose in life are all linked to high psychological well-being. Living a meaningful and balanced life is contingent upon it.



Understanding the psychological variables role in dance:

Dance is a field where emotional expression, creativity, and physical movement are frequently used to improve psychological well-being. Dancing is a great way to relieve stress, improve self-worth, and feel proud of yourself. Dancing facilitates profound connections between individuals and their emotions, which can elevate mood, cultivate awareness, and advance positive mental health. Dancing may be a source of stress as well as a means of relieving it. Although competitive dance, intense training, and performance pressure can be stressful for professional dancers, leisure dance is frequently employed as a stress-reduction strategy. Dance's rhythmic motions and physical exertion cause endorphins to be released, which eases stress and encourages relaxation. People can better manage their emotions and improve mental clarity by using dance as a constructive outlet for stress.

Dancing enhances a person's physical and mental well-being, which has a substantial positive impact on their quality of life. Along with improving social connection, emotional expressiveness, and self-confidence, it also fosters physical fitness, flexibility, and strength. People who dance on a daily basis, especially over an extended period of time, find that it enriches their feeling of purpose, joy, and overall satisfaction with life, and it becomes an integral part of their lifestyle.

Methodology

Aim: The study intends to investigate whether dancers and non-dancers vary in terms of psychological well-being, quality of life, and perceived stress .

Objectives:

1. To investigate the differences in psychological wellbeing between dancers and non-dancers
2. To investigate the differences in quality of life between dancers and non-dancers
3. To investigate the differences in perceived stress levels of dancers and non-dancers

Sample Size and Technique:

A convenient sample technique was employed to collect 58 individuals, comprising both non-dancers and dancers.

Instrumentation: Three standardized scales were employed to assess perceived stress, quality of life, and psychological well-being.

Data Collection Procedure: A Google Forms survey was given to each group in order to gather data.

Statistical analysis: The study employed t-tests to examine the mean differences between dancers and non-dancers in psychological well-being, quality of life, and perceived stress. To conduct the analysis, DataTab software was utilised.

Ethical Considerations: Participants were given explicit instructions, confidentiality was upheld, and informed consent was acquired.

Results

Figure 1 shows dancers and non-dancers' general health evaluations. Compared to non-dancers, a greater proportion of dancers assessed their health as "Good" according to the findings. There were the same number of individuals in both groups who assessed their health as "Fair," but fewer dancers reported being in poor health. Individuals who did not dance were somewhat more likely to rate their health as "Poor." Just one person in each group gave an "Excellent" rating for their health. All things considered, the graph indicates that dancers have a tendency to view their health more favourably than non-dancers, with a higher percentage of dancers claiming good health.

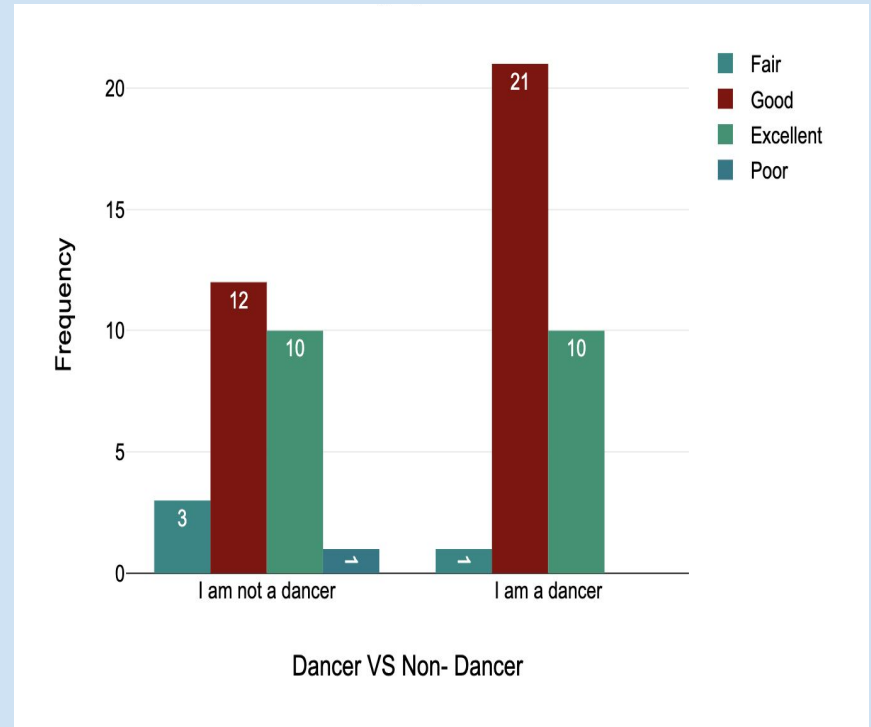


Figure 1- shows the overall health rating between dancers and non- dancers

Psychological well being between dancers and non- dancers

Table 1-*shows the descriptive statistics for psychological well being between dancers and non- dancers*

		Frequency	Mean	S.D	Minimum	Maximum
Psychological well being scale	I am a dancer	32	95.97	11.87	78	116
	I am not a dancer	26	90.69	7.25	79	108

Table 1 shows the mean, and Standard Deviation for different educational qualifications of respondents on psychological well being. The mean for a dancer is $M=95.97$, and non-dancer is $M=90.69$.

Table 2- *T- test for psychological well being between dancers and non- dancers*

		t	df	p	Cohen's d
Psychological well being scale	Equal variances	-1.98	56	.052	0.52
	Unequal variances	-2.08	52.33	.042	0.55

According to table 2, there was a statistical significance on the psychological well being scale, $t=-2.08$, $p = 0.042$ ($p<0.05$). The Cohen's d value of 0.55 represents a medium size effect.

Quality of life between dancers and non- dancers

Table 3- shows the descriptive statistics for quality of life between dancers and non- dancers

		Frequency	Mean	S.D	Minimum	Maximum
Quality of life scale	I am a dancer	32	93.19	14.5	52	112
	I am not a dancer	26	85.19	18.84	34	112

Table 3 shows the mean, and Standard Deviation for different educational qualifications of respondents on quality of life. The mean for a dancer is $M=93.19$, and non-dancer is $M=85.19$.

Table 4- T- test for quality of life between dancers and non- dancers

		t	df	p	Cohen's d
Quality of life scale	Equal variances	-1.83	56	.073	0.48
	Unequal variances	-1.78	46.23	.082	0.47

According to table 4, there was no statistical significance on the quality of life scale, $t(56)=-1.83$, $p = 0.073$ ($p>0.05$). The Cohen's d value of 0.48 represents a small size effect.

Perceived stress between dancers and non- dancers

Table 5-*shows the descriptive statistics for perceived stress between dancers and non- dancers*

		Frequency	Mean	S.D	Minimum	Maximum
Perceived stress score	I am a dancer	32	17.88	5.67	2	29
	I am not a dancer	26	18.85	4.25	12	29

Table 5 shows the mean, and Standard Deviation for different educational qualifications of respondents on perceived stress. The mean for a dancer is $M=17.88$, and non-dancer is $M=18.85$.

Table 6- *T- test for perceived stress between dancers and non- dancers*

		t	df	p	Cohen's d
Perceived stress score	Equal variances	0.72	56	.473	0.19
	Unequal variances	0.74	55.68	.46	0.2

According to table 6, there was no statistical significance on the quality of life scale, $t(56)= 0.72$, $p = 0.473$ ($p>0.05$). The Cohen's d value of 0.19 represents a very small size effect.

Discussion

Findings revealed that between dancers and non-dancers there was a significant difference in psychological well being (*Table 2*). Previous research has indicated contradictory findings wherein Acharya & Jain (2017) reported that Indian classical dancers have greater psychological well being and self esteem when compared to non dancers. This can be attributed to the greater attunement with the self. Lanke & Nath (2023) collecting data from 240 respondents reported that dancers experience higher physical and psychological well being than non- dancers.

With regards to quality of life, the present study found that there is no significant mean difference between dancers and non-dancers (*Table 4*). Previous research contradicts these findings, as can be seen by a study done by Kapur & Rawat (2016) which showcased that among professional dancers and non- dancers , there were statistically significant differences in quality of life, emotional intelligence and self concept. Furthermore, comparing between older adults practising dance versus non-dancer control groups found that dance group reported better balance, functional capacity , and quality of life (Shanahan, Coman et al., 2016).

Similar to the present study findings (*Table 6*), Kulshreshtha et al.(2023) also concluded that the prevalence of stress among Kathak dancers was similar to that of non-dancers. The elevated perceived stress levels of non- dancers indicated that they were more likely to report anxiety symptoms in comparison to dancers. Contradictory findings suggested by Shinde et al.(2016) represent that professional dancers display lower perceived stress compared to non- dancer

Conclusion

To conclude, dancing is a potent method of self-expression that improves one's physical and emotional health. In addition to promoting emotional release, creativity, and social connection-building, it provides a comprehensive strategy for both individual and group development. People can become more resilient and feel better about themselves by exercising.

Limitations in the present study:

- 1) The sample size taken into consideration in the present research could have been bigger
- 2) The present study only looks at differences between dancers and non-dancers, without considering the differences in multiple dance forms
- 3) The effect of various demographic variables was not taken into consideration in the present study.

Future implications: Dance plays an important role in enhancing the health and well being of its participants. Hence it becomes important to give it due attention in terms of how it affects physical and psychological health of the performers. Future research can aim to overcome the limitations of the present study.

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