

Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well-being among Classical Dance Performers: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the interplay of body image, emotional regulation and psychological well-being among classical dance performers. The sample consists of individuals practising Indian classical dance forms. The Body Appreciation Scale-2 (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005), the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003) and the Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) are used as tools of assessment for the present study. The analysis of the study revealed significant correlations among psychological well-being, body appreciation, and emotional regulation techniques.

Keywords: *Body Image, Emotional Regulation, Psychological Well-Being, Indian Class Dance*

In the world of performing arts, Indian classical dance is considered as an immensely revered art form which draws in audiences through exquisite body languages and powerful facial expressions, resulting in intricate combinations of psychological and physical variables interacting together significantly impacting the dancers' performances. Therefore, investigating psychological aspects such as body image, emotional regulation and psychological well-being is crucially important. The purpose of this study is to investigate how these three factors relate to classical dance performers.

According to Cash and Smolak (2011), the influence of internal psychological processes and external social variables leading to a person's feeling about their physical appearance is defined as one's body image. In physical art such as dance, professionals frequently put themselves under rigorous scrutiny to match aesthetic norms established by the dance form, leading to internalising expectations and paying closer attention towards their bodies. As Bolling and Pinheiro (2010) conclude, physical shape is one of the greatest artistic demands in professional dance, contributing to the desire of a thinner body and the continuous self-dissatisfaction state, due to a daily charge about the perfect body. Therefore, it is safe to assume that even in Indian classical dance, the idealisation of a specific body type may lead to a complicated relationship with the performers' own body image.

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Emotional regulation refers to the capacity to manage and modulate one's emotional experiences in adaptive ways, facilitating effective coping and interpersonal functioning (Gross 2015). One of the most popular models to describe the many techniques for emotional regulation is the Process Model. The method by which we control our emotions, when we experience them, and how we display them is referred to in this concept as regulatory techniques. It proposes four phases in the generation of these strategies: (a) the modification of the situation that generates the emotion, (b) the attentional deployment to change the focus to another situation, (c) the change in the meaning of the situation, and (d) the modification in the response. Cognitive reappraisal is oriented to the change in the meaning of the situation; it involves changing the way we look at the stressful situation to reduce the reaction associated with discomfort. Expressive suppression is oriented to the modification of the response, which consists of the forced attempt not to express the discomfort. According to Horwitz et al, 2015 Dance activity and training seem to be involved in the body's emotional interplay with others.

Psychological well-being as defined by Ryff & Keyes (1995) encompasses multifaceted dimensions of individuals' subjective experiences, encompassing aspects such as positive affect, life satisfaction, and personal growth. Quested & Duda (2010) found that feelings of competence and autonomy in their practice, opportunities for creative expressive and self actualisation and social support networks within dance communities contribute to dancers' psychological well being.

While there is extensive literature examining the various domains of dance psychology, a notable gap continues to exist in exploring the domains in context to Indian

classical dance. Researches in the field of dance psychology predominantly focus on forms such as jazz, ballet while Indian classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Manipuri remain relatively unexplored. This study proposed to address the research gap of limited studies on the mental health of Indian classical dance performers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mukherjee, V. & Das, S. (2023) conducted a study aimed to find the gender differences between male and female dancers in self-efficacy body image and perceived stress. It was found that there is a positive correlation between Self Efficacy (SE) and Body Image (BIA), a negative correlation between Self Efficacy (SE) and Perceived Stress (PS) and finally there seems to be again a positive correlation between Perceived Stress (PS) and Body Image (BIA).

Joshi, V. (2022) conducted a study to explore the implications of Indian dance forms on psychological well-being, emotional trait intelligence, and self-esteem. The results of the study revealed that a significant difference was found in the scores in terms of psychological well-being, trait emotional intelligence, and self-esteem, in participants who have been practising dance for 0-3 years and participants who have been practising dance for more than ten years, indicating that years of training in dance have a relationship with psychological well-being, trait emotional intelligence, and self-esteem.

Kulshreshtha et. al (2020) conducted a study to determine the prevalence and association between disordered eating attitudes and body shape concerns in a sample of North Indian Kathak dancers. Body dissatisfaction was significantly positively correlated with disordered

Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well-being among Classical Dance Performers: A Correlational Study

eating attitudes among the dancers ($p < .001$). Dancers with elevated body shape concerns were five times more likely to report disordered eating attitudes, relative to their peers ($p < .001$).

Hidayah, G. N. and Bariah, A. H. S. (2012) studied the prevalence of risk of eating disorder among dancers, comparison of the body composition between dancers and control subjects and to examine the relationship between eating attitude, body image concern, body composition and dieting behaviour. In conclusion, dancers were very concerned about body figure, appearance and fear of gaining weight which can lead to unhealthy dieting habits.

Pollatou et. al (2010) conducted a study aimed to investigate how body image was affected as a result of women dancers exercising at a professional and amateur level. The results showed that dance status was found to be significantly associated with three out of the ten MBSRQ subscales with professional dancers having higher mean scores on fitness orientation ($F=10.095$, $p<0.05$) and body areas dissatisfaction ($F=16.455$, $p<0,05$) and lower mean scores on overweight preoccupation ($F=9.83$, $p<0,05$).

Heiland, T.L et.al (2008) study on Body image and self-esteem of Los Angeles college dancers. Body image survey, eating disorder screen, and an interview process capturing dancers' lived experiences with daily pressures was used to collect the data. Results revealed the experiences of dancers with body image struggles and empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The aim of the research is to explore the relationship between Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well Being among classical dance performers.

Objective

To assess the correlation between Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well Being among classical dance performers. Also, to explore the emotional regulation technique employed by classical dance performers.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a correlation between Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well Being among classical dance performers.
2. The emotional regulation strategies employed by classical dancer performers will be cognitive reappraisal.

Tools Used:

1. **Body Appreciation Scale - 2 (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005)**, a 13-item positive body image measure, assesses individuals' acceptance of, favourable opinions toward, and respect for their bodies.
2. **Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003)** designed to assess individual differences in the habitual use of two emotion regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression.
3. **Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995)**, measures six aspects of wellbeing and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well-being among Classical Dance Performers: A Correlational Study

Sampling

The participants were selected using convenient sampling and consisted of 60 Indian classical dancers above the age of 15 years. The dance forms included in the study are the eight classical dance forms: Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri, Sattriya, Kuchipudi and Mohiniattam. The participants of the study were currently practising their art forms during the data collection. The participants were asked to fill out the online questionnaire.

RESULTS

60 participants participated in the study. Data analysis of the study was conducted through SPSS, and the test of normality and Pearson Correlation was conducted to test the hypotheses of the study.

Table 1 Normality Test of the sample based on the variables

	Shapiro-Wilk
	Sig.
Body Appreciation	.006
Expressive Suppression	.424
Cognitive Reappraisal	.274
Psychological Well-Being	.624

Note: This table demonstrated the tests of normality.

Table 2 Pearson Correlation Test of the variables: Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well Being

		Correlations			
		Psychological Well Being	Body Appreciation	Cognitive Reappraisal	Expressive Suppression
Psychological Well Being	Pearson Correlation	1	.368**	-.233	-.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.073	.956
	N	60	60	60	60
Body Appreciation	Pearson Correlation	.368**	1	.078	.279*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.555	.031
	N	60	60	60	60
Cognitive Reappraisal	Pearson Correlation	-.233	.078	1	.148
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073	.555		.260
	N	60	60	60	60
Expressive Suppression	Pearson Correlation	-.007	.279*	.148	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.956	.031	.260	
	N	60	60	60	60

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

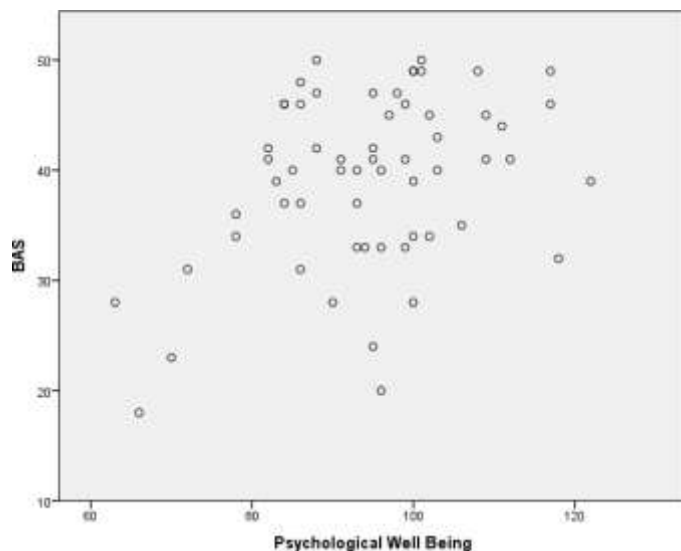
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: The r value is significant for the variables Psychological Well-Being and Body Appreciation (r=.368). The r value is not significant for the variable Psychological Well-Being and Cognitive Appraisal (r=-.233) and Psychological Well-Being and Expressive Suppression (r=-.007). The r value is not significant for variables Body Image and Cognitive Reappraisal (r=.078) and is significant for variables Body Image and Expressive Suppression (r=.279)

Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well-being among Classical Dance Performers: A Correlational Study

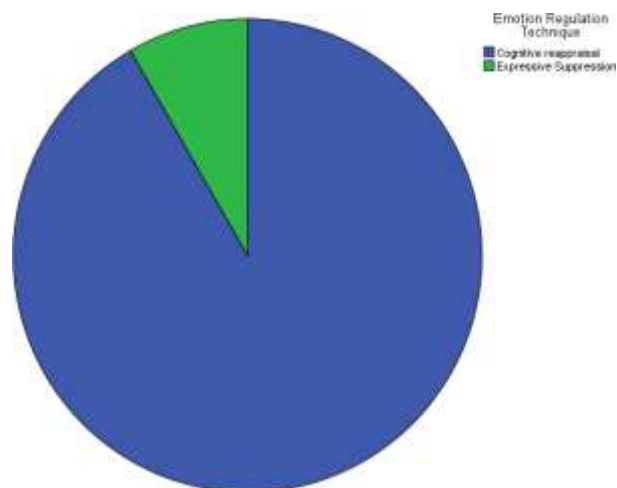
Table 2 indicates the analysis of the data upon conducting the Pearson Correlation Test on SPSS. The Pearson Correlation test shows that there is positive correlation between the scores of psychological well-being and body appreciation, which is statistically significant at 0.01 level.

Figure 1 Scatter plot



Note: Scatter plot showing the positive correlation between psychological well being and body image.

Figure 2 Pie Chart



Note: The pie chart indicates that cognitive reappraisal is the emotion regulation technique by majority of the sample.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study is to explore the interplay between Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well-Being among classical dance performers. The study also aims to explore the emotional regulation technique employed by classical dance performers.

Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well-being among Classical Dance Performers: A Correlational Study

The present study is a quantitative study which was conducted through an online survey method where the participants were asked to fill out the online questionnaires.

The sample of the study were 60 Indian classical dance performers, currently practising the art form. Data analysis of the study was conducted through SPSS. The test of normality and Pearson Correlation was conducted to test the hypotheses of the study.

The following were the hypotheses of the study:

- Hypothesis 1: There will be a correlation between Body Image and Psychological Well Being among classical dance performers.
- Hypothesis 2: The emotional regulation strategies employed by classical dancer performers will be cognitive reappraisal.

The data was tested for normality which revealed that the data was distributed normally. Table 1 indicated that the data is normally distributed.

The Pearson Correlation test was conducted to determine the relationship between body image, emotional regulation and psychological well-being. The findings revealed significant correlations among psychological well-being, body appreciation, and emotional regulation strategies, supporting the hypothesis of a relationship between these variables.

Table 2 indicated a positive correlation between psychological well-being and body appreciation, suggesting that classical dance performers with higher levels of body appreciation tend to report greater psychological well-being. This aligns with existing literature emphasising the importance of positive body image in promoting overall psychological health (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002). However, the correlation between psychological well-being and cognitive reappraisal was not significant. Instead, a positive correlation was found between body appreciation and cognitive reappraisal, indicating that dancers who possess a more positive body image are more likely to employ cognitive reappraisal as an emotional regulation strategy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the relationships between body image, emotional regulation, and psychological well-being in the context of classical dance. The findings highlight the importance of incorporating interventions that foster positive body image and effective emotional regulation skills among classical dance performers. The small sample size and absence of a representative sample may be considered limitations of the study.

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Body Image, Emotional Regulation and Psychological Well-being among Classical Dance Performers: A Correlational Study

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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