

Emotional Intelligence and Personality Traits of Dancers and Non-Dancers

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ABSTRACT

The study intends to investigate the differences in emotional intelligence and personality traits between dancers and non-dancers. A total of 101 dancers and 120 non-dancers were selected through simple random sampling for this research. To analyze the data, an independent t-test was employed to assess group differences. The findings indicate no significant difference in the overall emotional intelligence between dancers and non-dancers. However, with regard to personality traits, the analysis reveals that dancers exhibit significantly higher levels of all traits, except for conscientiousness. In particular, dancers possess the personality trait of openness to experience.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Personality Traits, Dancers and Non -Dancers*

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions—both their own and those of others. The concept was popularized by Daniel Goleman in the 1990s and has since become a central tenet in understanding human behavior and emotional regulation. Emotional intelligence consists of several core components which contribute significantly to a person's ability to help in social environments, manage stress, and establish positive interpersonal relationships. In the context of dancers, emotional intelligence assumes even greater importance. Dance is inherently an emotional art form, requiring a deep understanding of one's own emotional state as well as the ability to express emotions through movement. Dancers must maintain emotional control during performances, where the emotional impact of the performance can resonate not only with the audience but with the performers themselves. Additionally, the collaborative nature of dance requires dancers to work closely with others, necessitating a high level of empathy, social awareness, and self-regulation. Thus, the art of dancing provides a unique environment where emotional intelligence is continually developed and tested. Dancers often experience intense emotional states before, during, and after performances. The ability to regulate these emotions and stay focused is crucial, as it can affect performance quality and overall well-being. When comparing emotional intelligence between dancers and non-dancers, several key differences may arise. It is possible that individuals who engage in dance, particularly those who perform regularly, exhibit greater emotional awareness, empathy, and social skills than non-dancers. Non-dancers, in contrast,

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may engage in activities that do not require the same degree of emotional regulation or social awareness. For instance, non-dancers may primarily focus on tasks that demand cognitive and technical skills, such as work-related responsibilities, where emotional engagement is less emphasized. In contrast, dancers are often required to manage complex emotions such as performance anxiety, excitement, or vulnerability in front of an audience, making emotional regulation a more critical skill in their day-to-day lives. Furthermore, the emotional connection and feedback loop between performers and their audience provide dancers with a unique opportunity to develop their social and emotional awareness in ways that non-dancers may not experience. While emotional intelligence is not exclusive to dancers, their training and performance demands may foster heightened EI in areas such as emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills. This is important because it suggests that the emotional intelligence of dancers may differ in terms of emotional depth and social adaptability compared to non-dancers. Therefore, understanding these differences could contribute to enhancing emotional intelligence development in various non-dance-related fields as well.

Personality Traits

Personality traits refer to enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that define an individual. One of the most widely used frameworks for understanding personality is the Big Five personality traits model, which categorizes personality into five broad dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Each of these traits contributes to how individuals perceive the world, interact with others, and respond to challenges.

Openness to Experience: This trait involves the extent to which an individual is imaginative, curious, and open to new experiences. Individuals high in openness are more likely to engage in creative activities and are open to novel ideas. Dancers, by virtue of their artistic and creative nature, are expected to exhibit higher levels of openness to experience. The exploration of new choreography, artistic expression, and improvisation in dance aligns with the traits associated with openness. This creativity is a crucial element in dance and may be a factor that distinguishes dancers from non-dancers.

Conscientiousness: This trait reflects an individual's degree of organization, dependability, and work ethic. Individuals high in conscientiousness are often disciplined, reliable, and goal-oriented. In dance, conscientiousness plays a significant role in mastering complex choreography, maintaining regular practice schedules, and adhering to performance standards. However, it is important to note that while conscientiousness is highly important for both dancers and non-dancers, its expression may differ in intensity. Dancers may demonstrate heightened conscientiousness due to the rigorous demands of training and rehearsals, where attention to detail and persistence are critical for success.

Extraversion: Extraversion involves the degree to which a person is sociable, energetic, and assertive. Dancers may score higher on extraversion because the art form requires social interaction, whether in rehearsal settings, performances, or collaborations with fellow dancers and choreographers. The extroverted nature of dancers can manifest in their ability to engage with audiences, be confident in their physical expression, and create social bonds within their artistic community. In contrast, non-dancers may score lower on extraversion, particularly if their daily activities do not involve extensive social or group interactions.

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Agreeableness: This trait reflects an individual's tendency to be compassionate, cooperative, and empathetic. Dancers typically work in group settings where cooperation, mutual respect, and empathy are essential for achieving harmony and effective performances. Agreeableness is a critical trait for building trust and maintaining positive relationships with fellow dancers and choreographers. Non-dancers may also exhibit high levels of agreeableness, but their environments (e.g., in the workplace or isolated activities) may not always demand as much of this trait in the same way.

Neuroticism: Neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience negative emotions such as anxiety, sadness, and irritability. Dancers may exhibit lower levels of neuroticism compared to non-dancers because their art form requires emotional resilience in the face of criticism, stress, and performance pressures. Regular engagement in dance can foster coping strategies and emotional regulation that reduce anxiety and emotional instability. In contrast, non-dancers may not experience the same level of emotional challenges.

Understanding the differences in emotional intelligence and personality traits between dancers and non-dancers holds significant implications for both psychology and the arts. From a psychological perspective, examining these differences can contribute to the broader literature on emotional development and personality expression. Dancers may provide valuable insights into how emotional intelligence can be cultivated through artistic practice and how personality traits can evolve in environments that demand emotional and social sensitivity.

By exploring these differences, we can better appreciate the ways in which engagement in dance may promote emotional growth and personality development.

Objectives

- To identify the difference between dancers and nondancers on variable emotional intelligence and personality traits.

Hypothesis

- There will be significant differences between dancers and non- dancers on Emotional intelligence and its sub variables personal efficacy. Interpersonal efficacy and intrapersonal efficacy
- There will be significant differences between dancers and non- dancers on Personality traits.

HYP1: There will be significant differences between dancers and non- dancers on Emotional intelligence and its sub variables personal efficacy. Interpersonal efficacy and intrapersonal efficacy

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Table 1 Mean, SD and t value of emotional intelligence and its sub components between dancers and non-dancers.

Variable	category	N	mean	SD	df	t value
Personal efficacy	Dancers	101	92.13	11.050	152.897	4.188**
	Non dancers	120	97.28	9.343		
Interpersonal efficacy	Dancers	101	36.95	6.303	175.701	1.794
	Non dancers	120	38.26	6.344		
Intrapersonal efficacy	Dancers	101	35.38	8.408	135.083	5.112**
	Non dancers	120	30.75	5.828		
Emotional intelligence	Dancers	101	165.17	19.102	141.957	.034
	Non dancers	120	165.24	14.439		

The t value obtained for dancers and non-dancers for the variable emotional intelligence and its sub components are found to be -.034, 4.188, 1.794 and 5.112 respectively.

From the table 1 the mean value and SD for overall emotional intelligence are found to be M=165.17 and SD= 19.102 for dancers and M= 165.24 and SD= 14.439 for non-dancers. Also, the mean value obtained for the sub components of emotional intelligence personal efficacy, interpersonal efficacy and intrapersonal efficacy are found to be M=92.13 and SD=11.050, M=36.95 and SD=6.303, M=35.38 and SD=8.498 for dancers and M=97.28 and SD=9.343 M=38.26 and SD=6.344, M=30.75 and SD=5.828 for non dancers.

The result shows no significant difference between dancers and non-dancers for the variable overall emotional intelligence but the sub component of emotional intelligence viz; personal efficacy and intrapersonal efficacy seems to differ in which dancers are high in intrapersonal efficacy where that of non-dancers are high in personal efficacy. The interpersonal efficacy among the dancers and non-dancers seems to be differed but not significantly.

It is assumed that the self-reliance, sense of responsibility and commitment is higher for non-dancers than dancers. They have an ability to control their own behaviour compared to dancers. Also, they are more able to think and act independently. Dancers are not much confident like non dancers to achieve challenging goals. The positive thought processes of non-dancers contribute to achieve the same.

Also, the dancers seem to have more mental conflicts and tensions which cause them frustrated and anxious. As the non-dancers are confident and goal oriented, they are less affected by tensions and conflicts and are concentrated on their way of achievement only. The expectations and planning about their life and career makes them tension free and can manage the emotions. Hence, they have low intrapersonal conflicts compared to dancers.

Both dancers and non-dancers are same to maintain the social and personal relations and they both have an ability to bring and keep people together. Both have their own role in group activities and seem to be active. Also, the dancers have mental conflicts but in the case of understanding and dealing with the emotions they seems to be same as that of non-dancers.ie; both dancers and non-dancers can equally read the mental state of others regulate one's own behaviour. The reason may be because the dancers have some kind of emotional imbalances, they overcome it by expressing the sorrows and conflict through their performance towards audience by creating new choreographies. Hence the struggled thought left out from them after their performance which makes them emotionally stable.

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HYP: There will be significant differences between dancers and non-dancers on Personality traits

Table 2 Mean, SD and t value of personality traits between dancers and non-dancers

Variable	category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t value
Extroversion	Dancers	101	25.47	3.351	241.423	9.541**
	Non dancers	120	21.35	4.643		
Agreeableness	Dancers	101	25.76	3.406	240.349	10.857**
	Non dancers	120	21.01	4.699		
Conscientiousness	Dancers	101	21.87	3.071	252.833	7.436**
	Non dancers	120	24.86	4.443		
Neuroticism	Dancers	101	17.03	4.953	122.746	5.568**
	Non dancers	120	14.14	2.782		
Openness to experience	Dancers	101	28.60	2.943	235.046	28.377**
	Non dancers	120	17.97	3.976		

From table 2 it can be seen that the t value obtained for the variable personality traits viz; extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience are found to be 9.541, 10.857, 7.436, 5.568, 28.377 respectively. The mean and SD of the trait extroversion for dancers are M=25.47 and SD= 3.351 where that of non dancers are M=21.35 and SD=4.643. The mean and SD obtained for dancers and non dancers for the personality trait agreeableness are found to be M=25.76, SD=3.406 and M=21.01, SD=4.699. For the personality trait conscientiousness the mean value and SD for dancers are found to be M=21.87 and SD=3.071 where that of non dancers it is M=24.86 and SD=4.443. The mean and SD for neuroticism personality trait for dancers and non dancers are found to be M=17.03, SD=4.953 and M=14.14 ,SD=2.782 respectively. For openness trait the mean value and SD obtained for dancers are found to be M=28.60 and SD=2.943, where that of non dancers it is found to be M=17.97 and SD=3.976.

The t-value obtained while comparing the dancers groups with the non dancers point out personality traits are differed significantly at .01 level. The data obtained indicated that the dancers have least mean scores only in the personality traits conscientiousness when compared with non dancers.

Initially the extroversion personality trait is higher for dancers when compared to non dancers. i.e.; the dancers enjoys more when they are with other people and social gatherings. They seem to be more comfortable than non dancers when they perform on the presence of others and they are very active and being in the centre of attraction. They direct their interest and attention outside of the self and are action oriented. It is because the dancers are in to the creative profession and more responsive to rewards than non dancers. The reward for them may be the appreciations and applauds from the audience which makes them motivated. Hence, they are extroverts.

Secondly, the result also indicates that the personality trait agreeableness and openness to experience are also higher for dancers than non dancers. i.e.; it is supposed that the dancers are more friendly, tactful and optimistic than non dancers. Without optimism they cannot perform well towards audience. In the case of non dancers the results suggests that they put their own interests on others and seems to be uncooperative. Also, the dancers gave much importance to social harmony and they put aside their interests for others.

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Dance is considered as a multisensory performative art. The creativity is more related to the personality trait openness to experience compared to other traits. Here the result indicates that dancers are more open minded, curious and imaginative than non dancers. The high in openness trait indicate that they are highly creative and always open to novel ideas. For stage performances the dancers need to travel to reach new destinations, different cultures and unfamiliar places which might help them to open up new ideas to fulfill their creative ideas. They perceived the beauty in a different way and appreciates arts and enjoys the natural beauty. Also, the dancers are involved in intellectual discussions and seems to be more liberal than non dancers and they challenges and questions the authority. In the case of non dancers they have an analytical mind and they keep following a routine and are not aesthetically sensitive. For them involving in to the intellectual discussions are wasting time. It is because of the openness trait they created new concepts after close observation around them which is supposed to include as a subject in their dance and they express it towards audience in a creative way.

The personality trait neuroticism seems to be higher for dancers when compared to non dancers. The dancers are emotionally unstable and they have mood fluctuations compared to non dancers and they are more irritable, and anxious. Non dancers rarely feel depressed and seem to be relaxed always and they can easily deal with stress. The dancers are greatly going through hardships in order to achieve their status in the dance world. The social world placed a stereotype on dancers and the frustration happening because of the pressure from the media parents, friends etc regarding their performance. To avoid the conflicts, they need to perform well and work hard with determination. Hence, they are under pressure which affects their emotional stability. It may be because of the reason that they are high in neuroticism than non dancers.

The Conscientiousness trait is higher for non dancers compared to dancers. The creative artist usually preferred to be disordered, disorganized and unstructured in certain tasks. Being in to creative profession, dancers followed the same orderliness in their life. They may act spontaneously and are not punctual. Non dancers are more organized and self-disciplined than dancers. They finished their important tasks in a right way in which dancers failed. It is because of that the conscientiousness trait favored non dancers most.

Hence among the personality trait except conscientiousness all other personality traits seem to be high on dancers. Above all, dancers seem to be possessed by the personality trait openness to experience.

A study on creativity and personality in professional dancers by Fink and Woschnjak (2011) concluded that dancers have less conscientiousness and are more open to experiences than the normal groups which supported the study. Also Alter,1984; Bakker 1991; Strul 2006 compared non dancers and dancers are more creative and they scored high on neurotiscm and openness to trait which strengthen the present study results.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The findings indicate no significant difference in the overall emotional intelligence between dancers and non-dancers. However, with regard to personality traits, the analysis reveals that dancers exhibit significantly higher levels of all traits, except for conscientiousness. In particular, dancers possess the personality trait of openness to experience.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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