

Research Paper

## Psychological Well-Being among Bharatanatyam Dancers and Non-Bharatanatyam Dancers

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aims to compare the level of psychological well-being among Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers. Psychological well-being is understood as an individual's overall mental health. It including positive emotions, life satisfaction, and a sense of purpose. In this study, Bharatanatyam is seen as a dance form that serves as a powerful tool for mental well-being. It reduces stress by completely engaging the mind in the art, distracting from daily worries. The rhythmic and repetitive movements is believed to create a calming and reflective mental state. The link between movements and emotions helps dancers release suppressed feelings, promoting emotional healing and stability. Samples for present study consist Bharatanatyam dancers who have passed their junior exam recognised by Karnataka board exam and non-Bharatanatyam dancers those who had not learnt Bharatanatyam. The participants were administered the psychological well-being scale developed by Carol Ryff and Keyes (1995). The data collected will be analysed using independent sample 't' test and discussed scientifically.

**Keywords:** *Psychological Well-Being, Bharatanatyam Dancers and Non-Bharatanatyam Dancers*

### BHARATANATYAM

India is known for its rich cultural heritage, shaped by centuries of artistic expression and tradition. This cultural legacy has produced various classical dance forms, one of which is the Bharatanatyam, a dance form that embodies the essence of India's artistic history.

Bharatanatyam originated in southern India and has its roots in the Natya Shastra, an ancient text on performing arts. Traditionally performed in temples as a devotional offering to the gods, this dance form is characterized by structural body movements, symbolic hand gestures (mudras), and expressive facial expressions (bhavas) to tell mythological stories. With its rich history and cultural significance, with its rich background and cultural importance, Bharatanatyam continues to captivate audiences worldwide through its elegance and storytelling ability.

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Bharatanatyam is among the oldest Indian classical dance form, originating in the Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu. It is often seen as the mother of many other classical dances forms of India. The term Bharatanatyam derives from its component bhava (expression), raga (music), tala (beat or rhythm) and Natya (dance) in Tamil. In Hindu tradition, it is thought to have divine origins, coming from the principles of the *Natya Veda* as a form of entertainment and communication that could be understood by all sections of society.

### ***Banis or Styles in Bharatanatyam***

- **Thanjavur Style:** The Thanjavur style of Bharatanatyam developed in the royal court of Thanjavur. It was developed and preserved by the descendants of the Thanjavur Quartet, who significantly influenced the classical structure and repertoire of Bharatanatyam.
- **Kalakshetra Style:** The Kalakshetra style was developed by Rukmini Devi, who trained under Pandanallur Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai and by refining elements of the Pandanallur Bani, she created a distinct style.
- **Vazhuvoor Style:** The Vazhuvoor style was founded by Ramaiah Pillai of Vazhuvoor. This style focuses on the feminine aspect of Bharatanatyam, emphasizing lasya (graceful and gentle movements) over tandava (vigorous movements). It is known for its speed, elegant poses.
- **Mysore Style:** Mysore style traces back to the court of Krishna raja Wodeyar (1799-1868). Many notable dancers thrived in his court. Jetty Tayamma is recognized as a key contributor to the development of this style.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Defining psychological well-being clearly has been a challenge in psychology. Ryff (1989) suggested that psychological well-being can be understood through six dimensions: self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life. These dimensions represent a person's capacity for self-determination, control over their surroundings, manage life situations effectively, personal development, establishing meaningful relationships, and a finding meaning and purpose in life.

### ***Types of Psychological Well-Being***

1. **Hedonic Well-being:** Hedonic wellbeing mainly focuses on happiness. It involves both emotional and cognitive aspects, and higher happiness levels occurring when both are strong. (Carruthers & Hood, 2004).
2. **Eudaimonic Well-being:** Eudaimonic well-being highlights purposeful living and self-realization rather than pleasure. Carol Ryff's model describes eudaimonic well-being through six dimensions of psychological functioning.

### ***Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being***

1. **Self-Acceptance:** Self-acceptance is the ability to recognize and accept every aspect of oneself. It involves having a positive outlook and acknowledging both strengths and weakness.
2. **Autonomy:** Autonomy assesses individual's independence in various areas of their lives. It includes the ability to make their personal choices, maintain emotional and personal independence even when others express disagreement.

## Psychological Well-Being among Bharatanatyam Dancers and Non-Bharatanatyam Dancers

3. **Personal Growth:** Personal growth reflects a person's willingness to learn from new experiences and challenges. It indicates self-improvement.
4. **Purpose in Life:** Purpose in life means to having clear sense of direction that gives meaning to one's lives. These goals should be realistic.
5. **Positive Relations with Others:** This dimension involves the ability to form warm, trusting, and meaningful relationship with others. It emphasizes maintaining healthy interpersonal connections.
6. **Environmental Mastery:** Environmental mastery refers to an individual's ability to manage life situations and adapt to changing or challenging environments.

By examining the structured discipline of these four Banis through a psychological lens, we can see how the dance form supports the six dimensions of well-being identified by Ryff.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature focuses on providing the foundation of knowledge to the current study on psychological well-being among Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers.

Drishti Negi and Dr. Nisha Kumari (2024) studied the difference in psychological well-being of dancers and non-dancers, they found no significant difference in the anxiety and autonomy, personal growth, positive relations, self-acceptance dimensions. However, significant difference was observed in environmental mastery and purpose in life. There is a positive relationship between self-esteem and the dimensions environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation, self-acceptance. In contrast, the relationship between self-esteem and the dimensions autonomy, purpose in life is not significant. The connection between self-esteem and anxiety is significant and negative. In addition, the association between anxiety and the dimensions environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation, self-acceptance, autonomy is significant and positive, while the relationship between anxiety and purpose in life dimension is significant and negative. Dancers scored high in self-esteem and environmental mastery compared to non-dancers, indicating individuals who engage in dance activities possess the high ability and opportunity to control their surroundings and has high sense of worth and self-perception compared to those who do not dance. Non dancers scored high in Purpose in life, meaning they possess greater capacity to gain knowledge, discover new things, and overcome challenges that promote growth. In this study, the relationship between anxiety and self-esteem is negative while the relationship between anxiety and the dimensions environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation, self-acceptance, autonomy is positive and the relationship between anxiety and Purpose in life is negative. Additionally, the relationship between self-esteem and the dimensions environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation and self-acceptance is positive while the relationship between Self-esteem and the dimensions autonomy, purpose in life is not significant

Matthew Reyes (2023) findings indicated that there was no significant relationship in frequency of dance and PWB, even though there was a weak positive correlation. However, a moderate and statistically significant relationship was noted between REIS and PWB in the dancer group. The results suggested that frequency of dance. Did not influence the relationship between REIS and PWB

Parijat Lanke and Papri Nath (2023) found that the dancers reported significantly higher physical and psychological well-being compared to non-dancers. Further mediation analysis

showed that psychological resilience mediates the relationship between dance and its effect on physical and psychological well-being. The study encourages more research on dance as a leisure activity.

Joseph Lobo, Bryan Dale Bernardo, Edison Buan, Duane Ramirez, Grace Ang, Xennell Joshua Alfonso, Diana Varona, Jeffrey Mabaga, Joven Malig (2022) consistently showed positive effect of dance engagement to psychological well-being. It suggests that continuous dance participation may lead to a healthy psychological state. Dance has proven to be an effective activity that positively influences psychological well-being and other dimensions.

S. Kanaka and Dr. Sujatha Mohan (2022) found that longer a dancer practices Bharatanatyam, greater is their psychological wellbeing. The study also confirms that age affects the relationship between Bharatanatyam dance practice and psychological well-being.

Pai, et al (2020) stated that Indian Classical Dance forms play an important role in representing traditional culture allowing individuals in the country to easily connect with them. There are various significant Indian Classical Dance forms, with Bharatnatyam being one of the most prominent. This particular dance combines body movements and emotional expression. The study highlights the general features of Indian Classical Dance, Bharatnatyam and movement therapy by investigating their benefits and contributions to one's overall well-being. Dance is thought to enhance well-being by engaging physical, psychological and cognitive aspects of a person.

Avleen Kaur Vig and Garima Srivastava (2018) found a significant positive correlation between flow and PWB. An interpretive phenomenological analysis of the interviews revealed themes related to the flow experience including flow as a positive optimal experience, a spiritual experience, transformation of time, and facilitators and inhibitors of flow. The study confirmed the positive link between flow and well-being and explored the phenomenological experiences of flow in dance.

Acharya, Chirmi, Jain, Madhu (2017) revealed that the domains environmental mastery, personal growth, personal relation and self-acceptance and autonomy of psychological well-being were better in Indian classical dancers compared to non-dancers. This finding can help to spread awareness about the positive impact of Indian classical dancers on both body and mind.

Behzad Behzad Nia, Hassan Mohammad Zade, Ahmad Farokhi, Reza Ghasemnejad (2014) found that students who did not participate in aerobic dancing classes showed different scores. The results indicated that aerobic dancing classes had beneficial effect on purpose in life during three months. Overall, the findings suggest that student's well-being is related to their lifestyle and experiences, which might affect their outlook and attitude towards wellness. The research emphasized the need to pay attention to student's psychological well-being.

Virginia Gurley, Allen Neuringer and Judy Masee (1984) compared three areas: dance, sports and academics. They found that both dance and sports reduced anxiety and depression compared to academics. In addition, dance classes produced more positive evaluation of psychological well-being on eight other scales than sports class. Dance blends art with

physical activity, and this combination may contribute to the observed differences in the psychological effects of dance compared to sports.

## **METHOD**

This chapter delves into the approach used in the study to collect relevant data. It highlights on the research questions and hypotheses developed, along with the tools used to collect data and their reliability and validity, including the research design, inclusion criteria, and sampling method. Finally, the method of data analysis used to examine the acquired data is described.

### ***Aim***

To compare the level of psychological well-being between Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers.

### ***Research questions***

- What is the level of psychological well-being among Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers.

### ***Objectives***

- To assess and compare the level of psychological well-being among Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers.

### ***Hypothesis***

There is no significant difference in the level of psychological well-being between Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers.

### ***Variables***

- Independent variable: dancers.
- Dependent variable: psychological well-being.

### ***Research design***

The current study's research design was exploratory in nature and relied on a quantitative technique, namely the sample survey method, to collect the necessary data. Exploratory research is a research strategy that seeks to develop a deeper understanding of a phenomenon by exploring its dimensions, characteristics, and relationships. Neuman (2011).

### ***Sampling***

The study used a Purposive sampling method. The sample included 120 participants, consisting of 60 Bharatanatyam and 60 non-Bharatanatyam dancers. The sample was collected from the region of Karnataka. Participants were invited to join the study through WhatsApp, phone call and e-mail, which included a google form and questionnaire. Participation was entirely voluntary.

***Table 1 Showing the distribution of samples across participants***

| <b>Bharatanatyam dancers</b> | <b>Non-Bharatanatyam dancers</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 60                           | 60                               | 120          |

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

- People both urban and rural area
- Bharatanatyam dancers who have completed at least their junior examination

## **Psychological Well-Being among Bharatanatyam Dancers and Non-Bharatanatyam Dancers**

- Those who can communicate in English
- Non-Bharatanatyam dancers who have not undergone formal Bharatanatyam training.

### ***Assessment Tool***

The researcher used the psychological well-being questionnaire developed by Ryff & Keyes in 1995. The data sheet contains socio-demographic details like name, age, gender.

### **Psychological well-being Questionnaire**

The questionnaire by Ryff & Keyes (1995) contains 18 questions measuring different dimensions of psychological well-being. These include autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with other, purpose of life, self-acceptance. It has 7-point scales from strongly agree to strongly disagree, where:

1= strongly agree

2= somewhat agree

3 = a little agree

4 = neither agree or disagree

5 = a little disagree

6 = somewhat disagree

7 = strongly disagree.

### **Scoring**

The Autonomy subscale items are Q15, Q17, Q18. The Environmental Mastery subscale items are Q4, Q8, Q9. The Personal Growth subscale items are Q11, Q12, Q14. The Positive Relations with Others subscale items are Q6, Q13, Q16. The Purpose in Life subscale items are Q3, Q7, Q10. The Self-Acceptance subscale items are Q1, Q2, and Q5.

Q1, Q2, Q3, Q8, Q9, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q17, and Q18 should be reverse-scored. Reverse-scoring means that these items are worded in the opposite direction of the scale's measuring. The formula for reverse-scoring an item is:

$((\text{Number of scale points}) + 1) - (\text{Respondent's answer})$

### **Reliability and Validity**

Ryff's (1989a) original paper showed good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .93 to .86. Additionally, test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .88 to .81 over six weeks.

For validity, convergent validity was tested by comparing the scales with existing measures of positive and negative functioning.

### ***Procedure***

A total of 120 participants were selected, with 60 Bharatanatyam dancers and 60 non-Bharatanatyam dancers. All ethical considerations were kept in mind before the data collection. The data was collected through google forms after the clear instructions were provided for the questionnaires. The collected data was then organized in spread sheet and imported to MS Excel, the total score for all the dimensions of psychological well-being scale was calculated. After that, the total scores were imported into SPSS for further analysis.

### ***Data analysis***

- Data was analysed using SPSS

## Psychological Well-Being among Bharatanatyam Dancers and Non-Bharatanatyam Dancers

- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistics- independent sample t test.

### *Ethical consideration*

The following the ethical guidelines were followed in this study:

- Institutional approval was obtained for conducting the research.
- The data collected was used only for the research purpose.
- Confidentiality of the responses was maintained throughout the study.
- Informed consent was obtained from the participants before collecting of data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

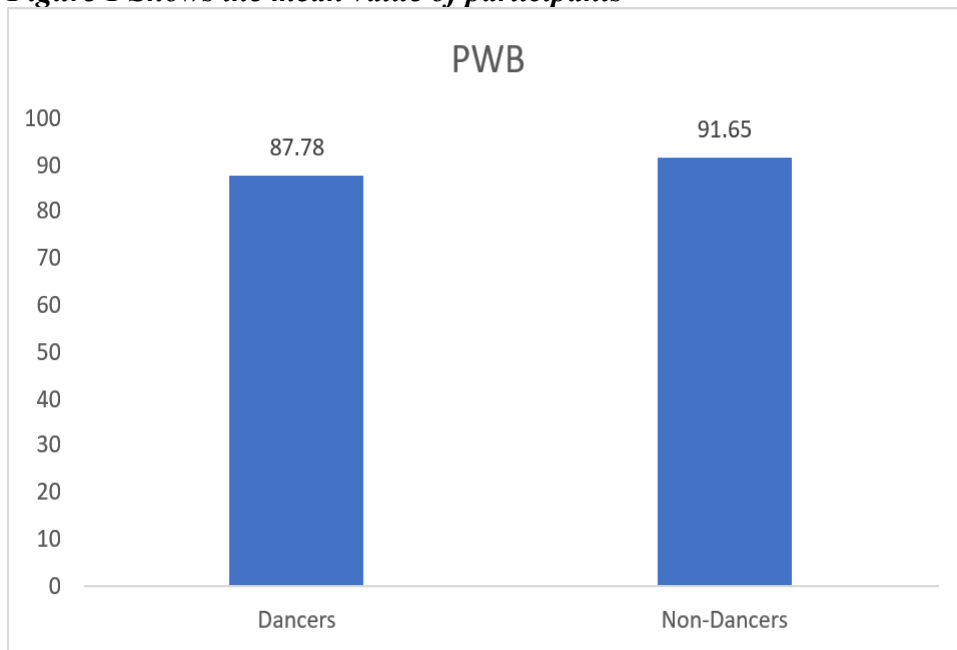
The results are analysed using independent sample t-test. This test helped in identifying the significant difference between Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers.

### Section1 Testing the Hypothesis

*Table 2 Shows the mean of psychological well-being scores for Bharatanatyam dancers and Bharatanatyam non-dancers*

|     | PARTICIPANTS | N   | MEAN SCORE | T SCORE |
|-----|--------------|-----|------------|---------|
| PWB | Dancers      | 60  | 87.78      | 0.120   |
|     | Non-Dancers  | 60  | 91.65      |         |
|     | Total        | 120 |            |         |

*Figure 1 Shows the mean value of participants*



The hypothesis stated that, there is no significant difference in the level of psychological well-being between Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers. Based on the table, the obtained t value is 0.120, since this value was not statistically significant at 0.05 level, we retain the hypothesis. This means that there is no significant difference in the level of psychological well-being between Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers.

## CONCLUSION

The findings from this study suggest there is no significant difference in psychological well-being between Bharatanatyam dancers and non-Bharatanatyam dancers. Non-dancers reported a slightly higher mean score, but this difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, within the limitations of this study, Bharatanatyam practice does not appear to significantly affect overall psychological well-being. However, this does not mean dance lacks psychological benefits. Multiple factors influence psychological well-being, including personality traits, social support, lifestyle patterns, coping strategies, and life experiences. Future research might look into these variables and focus on specific dimensions of psychological well-being rather than overall scores. The findings align partially with the study conducted by Negi and Kumari (2024), which found no significant differences in dimensions such as anxiety, autonomy, personal growth, positive relations, and self-acceptance between dancers and non-dancers. However, their study identified significant differences in environmental mastery and purpose in life, suggesting that specific dimensions of well-being may be differentially influenced by dance practice.

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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