

Nature of Personality Patterns and Coping Strategies among Female Indian Classical Dancers (Bharatanatyam Dancers) and Contemporary Dancers

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Abstract

The Personality pattern and coping skill both are very important aspects for a dancer because these characteristics support them to resolve the stress of stage performance in front of the audience or if doing any mistakes in the dance. The main aim of the present study is to analyze and compare the personality pattern, coping strategies of Indian classical dancers (Bharatanatyam Dancers) and Contemporary dancers. The sample size was 90, divided into 3 groups, i.e., Indian classical Dance Group (Bharatanatyam Dancers), Contemporary Dance Group, and Control group (non-dancer). Each group consisted of 30 female participants, age ranging between 19 to 22 years, selected from different established dance institutes across Kolkata. The NEO Five factor Inventory- Revised (Costa, Robert & Mc.Crae, 1991) and Coping Checklist II (Rao, Subbakrishna, and Prabhu, 1989) were administered to the participants. For data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean, SD), Inferential Statistics (ANOVA one way and Post Hoc- Turkey Tests) and product moment correlation were applied. Results – 1) Indian classical dance Group (Bharatanatyam Dancers) is using a significantly greater amount of agreeableness, conscientiousness, religion & faith coping strategies, and social support seeking coping strategies. 2) Contemporary Dance Group is using a significantly greater amount of extraversion, openness and acceptance coping strategies.

Keywords: Personality Pattern; Coping Strategies; Bharatanatyam Dancers; Contemporary Dancers

Introduction

According to Hindu philosophy yoga originated from Lord Shiva. Through yoga, he represents the cosmic dance form called “Nataraja”. This story illustrates the deep connection between yoga and dance. The dance consists of necessary and purposeful sequences of human movement. Like yoga, different forms of dance have always been helpful for our physical health and mental balance. It is a performing art, composed of an active, non-competitive form of exercise that helps to improve our physical, mental, and emotional well-being (Chatterjee, 2013). According to Hankir et al., (2017), there is a significant relationship between the performing arts and psychological well-being. It can elevate mental function, general and psychological well being, greater self-confidence, and self-esteem, and social skill (Eckmann, 2007). That means dance is a pathway, which connects the body with the psyche or mind in a human. Dance styles cover social dance, creative or contemporary dance, and traditional or classical dance.

Dance, Personality and Coping

Allport (1961) suggested that trait is generalized neuropsychic structures (particularly to the individual) that are inferred from behavior, not directly observed and that guide a consistent form of adaptive and stylistic behavior. Luck (2010) claims that the movements involved in dance are the reflectors of personality structure as well as physical ability. The dance floor is the perfect place to learn about one individual. According to Gray & Gray (2010) dance moves can reveal one's personality, extroverts tend to be energetic. For this reason they may easily do exaggerated and energetic movements of their head and arms. Fareeth (2016) expressed his view on the impact of performing arts in developing the overall personality. He interacted with 125 college students of fine arts, affiliated to Bharathidasan University in Tiruchirappalli District. Results revealed that Arts can play a major role in developing human personality by creating new ideas. It helped students to think independently, differently, and critically without fear of expressing their thoughts and also to overcome their stage fears and negativity. In psychology, there are several tools to assess one's personality. In current research "NEO Five factor Inventory- Revised" is used to explore the dimensions of personality of the dancers.

Coping is important for stress management. It expends conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems, and seeks to master, reduce or tolerate stressors' conflict (Weiten & Lloyd, 2008). Coping has been defined as constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific internal and external demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Dancers need to learn the style of dance and also to stay calm under pressure and keep themselves focused on their performances. Still if sometimes they make mistakes, the literature shows that they face difficulty to cope with stress. In particular, the dancers show dysfunctional behavior to cope with stress. The classical ballet dancers suffer from a high level of physiological as well as psychological stress (Buckroyd, 2000). Barrel (1999) examined that the adolescent western classical dancers who use emotional-focused coping strategies, reported a lower level of self-esteem and a higher level of depression than dancers who used problem- focused coping strategies. Taylor & Taylor (1995) suggested that if dancers daily face criticism, their self-esteem tends to decrease and that may affect coping styles. The present study aims to explore how the dancers of different dance styles cope with their stress.

Aim

The purpose of this present study is to explore the nature and relationship of personality patterns and coping strategies among young adult female Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers), Contemporary dancers (Non classical Dancers) and Control group participants and the relationship.

Objectives

1. To determine whether there are any differences in personality factors and coping strategies between the control group, Indian classical dance group (Bharatnatyam Dancers) and contemporary dance group participants.
2. To find out the interrelationship among the variables, within the three groups.

Materials and Methods

Participants and Sampling

The sample size for this present study was 90, consisting of female young adult (age range - 18 to 22 years) participants. The study group consisted of 2 categories, viz., Indian Classical Dance Group (Bharatnatyam dancers, n= 30) and Contemporary Dance Group (Non Classical dancers, n= 30). Another was the control group, consisting of 30 participants who were not exposed to any kind of dance training. All the dancer-participants had at least 5 years of experience in their own respective field. Participants were selected using the purposive sampling method. Bharatnatyam dancers were strictly chosen from established institutions that provide training specifically in Bharatnatyam dance and Contemporary dancers were strictly chosen from established institutions that provide training specifically in contemporary dance.

Tools

NEO Five Factor Inventory-Revised

NEO FFI-R was developed by Paul T. Costa, Jr. and Robert R. Mc Crae (1991) to initiate the five-factor model of personality. It is a representation of the structure of traits which was developed. The five factors represent the most basic dimensions underlying the traits. This scale consists of 60 items.

Norm-The test-retest coefficients are .723 for agreeableness, .751 Conscientiousness, .757 Extraversion, .701 Neuroticism and .776 for openness. The coefficient alpha estimate was strikingly high; these were .99 for A, C and O factor and .98 for factor E and N. The reliability of the five scales were assessed in terms of internal consistencies and test-retest. The alpha coefficients for the individual facet scales ranged from .56 to .81. The full-scale coefficient alphas ranged from .86 to .95 (Costa et. al. 1991). Coefficients were found to be .79, .79, .80, .75, and .83 for N, E, O, A and C scales, respectively.

Coping Checklist II

Coping behavior is operationally defined as the response to external life stress that serves to prevent, avoid, reduce or control stress and emotional distress. Rao, K., Subbakrishna, D.K., and Prabhu, G.G. developed a coping measurement checklist which was called Coping Checklist II. The coping checklist has 7 subscales.

Norm-The test-retest reliability is 0.74 and the internal consistency (alpha) ranges from 0.75 to 0.85 indicating adequate reliability.

Procedure

The present study aims to explore the nature of personality patterns and coping strategies used by the young adult female Indian classical dancers (C.D), Contemporary dancers (CON.D) and Control group (C.G) participants and the relationship between these factors. In the case of the Control group participants (who do not have any dance training) were matched to the study group based on Kuppaswami socio demographic domains. Before collecting the data, the nature of the study was properly explained to all the participants. The rapport was properly established with subjects. Then, the subjects were given the information schedule to gather socio-demographic detail for collecting the necessary information. Then, the measurement of socioeconomic status was done to ensure that the subjects fall in the category of the middle class for the present study. After that, NEO-FFI and coping checklist II was given to check the personality pattern and external life stress that serves to prevent, avoid, reduce, or control stress and emotional distress in different terms. The responses were then scored following the scoring procedure:

1. Descriptive statistics (Mean, SD,) were done to show the nature of the data.
2. Inferential statistics (ANOVA one way, & Post Hoc-Tukey test) were used to find out the significant difference among the different groups.
3. Product moment correlation was used to find out the significant relationship between the personality pattern and coping strategies among the different groups.

Result

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Control Group (C.G)</i>	<i>Classical Dance Group (C.D)</i>	<i>Contemporary Dance Group (CON.D)</i>
Participants	30	30	30
Age (Yrs)	M-20.63 SD-1.38	M-20.25 SD-1.40	M-20.50 SD-1.15
Sex	Female	Female	Female
Socio-Economic Status	M-50.90 SD-5.35	M-49.43 SD-3.58	M-50.63 SD-4.64
Education	Graduation – Post Graduation	Graduation- Post Graduation	Graduation- Post Graduation
Experience of Dance	Not exposed by formal learning process of dance training	5 to 12yrs	5 to 7 yrs
Religion	Hinduism	Hinduism	Hinduism

Table 1: Showing Mean &Standard Deviations (S.D) of Socio-demographic variables (Age, sex, education) and socioeconomic status (as revealed on Kuppuswamy’s Socio-economic Status Scale) of 3 Groups (CG ,C.D & CON.D).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Neuroticism	C.G	23.07	5.43	2.27	0.11
	C.D	26.47	7.76		
	CON.D	25.07	5.13		
Extraversion	C.G	28.67	5.15	12.57	0.01**
	C.D	25.47	3.78		
	CON.D	31.57	4.69		
Openness	C.G	24.10	4.68	19.17	0.01**
	C.D	22.17	5.34		
	CON.D	29.87	5.00		
Agreeableness	C.G	26.83	6.19	23.94	0.01**
	C.D	31.03	6.60		
	CON.D	19.33	7.08		
Conscientiousness	C.G	29.47	6.32	8.05	0.01**
	C.D	33.50	7.36		
	CON.D	26.50	6.64		

* P<0.05 (Significant beyond 0.05 level).

** P<0.01(Significant beyond 0.01 level).

Table 2: Showing The Mean (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and ANOVA (F), of the scores obtained by the C.G, C.D AND CON.D groups on NEO FFI.

It is evident from the results of One way- ANOVA that there is a significant difference among C.G, C.D and CON.D in the dimensions of extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Neuroticism	C.G – C.D	3.4	0.09
	C.D – CON.D	-2	0.43
	CON.D - C.G	1.4	0.65
Extraversion	C.G – C.D	3.20	0.03
	C.D – CON.D	-2.90	0.05*
	CON.D - C.G	6.10	0.35
Openness	C.G – C.D	1.93	0.30
	C.D – CON.D	-7.70	0.01**
	CON.D - C.G	5.77	0.01**
Agreeableness	C.G – C.D	-4.20	0.04
	C.D – CON.D	11.70	0.01**
	CON.D - C.G	7.50	0.01**
Conscientiousness	C.G – C.D	-4.03	0.06
	C.D – CON.D	7.00	0.01**
	CON.D - C.G	2.97	0.21

* P<0.05 (Significant beyond 0.05 level).

** P<0.01(Significant beyond 0.01 level).

Table 2a: The mean differences between the groups on NEO FFI as depicted on Tukey Test (Post Hoc) and corresponding Level of Significance.

Above table indicates that all groups showed significant differences in various variables of personality factor domain. The C.G scores higher than the CON.D and CON.D also scores higher than the C.D on the extraversion variable. The findings also suggest that in the openness CON.D score higher than C.G and C.D simultaneously. Findings also suggest that in case of agreeableness C.G score higher than CON.D and C.D also higher than CON.D. And conscientiousness also suggests C.D scores higher than the CON.D scores.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Problem Solving	C.G	6.83	2.02	3.62	0.08
	C.D	7.93	1.11		
	CON.D	7.33	1.49		
Distraction positive	C.G	6.13	1.41	2.38	0.10
	C.D	6.30	2.07		
	CON.D	7.10	1.95		
Distraction negative	C.G	.73	1.05	1.68	0.19
	C.D	.50	.82		
	CON.D	1.77	.32		
Acceptance / Redefinition	C.G	1.87	.34	31.82	0.01**
	C.D	1.54	.28		
	CON.D	2.17	.40		
Religion / Faith	C.G	5	2.07	18.06	0.01**
	C.D	6.53	1.87		
	CON.D	3.33	2.23		

Denial/Blame	C.G	6.33	2.23	1.15	0.32
	C.D	6.3	1.39		
	CON.D	5.67	2.04		
Social Support	C.G	4.06	1.11	42.13	0.01**
	C.D	5.1	.71		
	CON.D	2.6	1.26		

* P<0.05 (Significant beyond 0.05 level).

** P<0.01 (Significant beyond 0.01 level).

Table 3: Showing- The Mean (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and ANOVA (F) of the scores obtained by the C.G, C.D AND CON.D groups on Coping Checklist II.

Table 3: It has been revealed through the one way- ANOVA that there is a significant difference among C.G, C.D, and CON.D in the dimensions of acceptance/redefinition, religion/ faith, and social support.

Variables	Groups	Mean Difference	Level of significance
Problem solving	C.G – C.D	-1.10	0.45
	C.D – CON.D	-0.6	0.31
	CON.D - C.G	0.5	0.44
Distraction positive	C.G – C.D	0.16	0.93
	C.D – CON.D	0.8	0.22
	CON.D - C.G	-0.96	0.11
Distraction negative	C.G – C.D	0.23	0.76
	C.D – CON.D	-0.6	0.17
	CON.D - C.G	0.37	0.51
Acceptance / Redefinition	C.G – C.D	1.13	0.05*
	C.D – CON.D	3.76	0.01**
	CON.D - C.G	-2.63	0.01**
Religion / Faith	C.G – C.D	-1.53	0.01**
	C.D – CON.D	3.20	0.01**
	CON.D - C.G	-1.66	0.01**
Denial/Blame	C.G – C.D	0.03	0.99
	C.D – CON.D	-0.63	0.41
	CON.D - C.G	0.67	0.38
Social support	C.G – C.D	-1.03	0.01**
	C.D – CON.D	2.50	0.01**
	CON.D - C.G	-1.47	0.01**

* P<0.05 (Significant beyond 0.05 level).

** P<0.01 (Significant beyond 0.01 level).

Table 3a: Showing- The mean differences between the groups on Coping strategies as depicted on Tukey test (Post Hoc) and corresponding Level of Significance.

Table 3a: It has been indicated that all groups showed significant differences in various Sub-Scale of the Coping strategies domain. The C.G and C.D both are scored higher than the CON.D on the acceptance, social support variables. The findings also suggest that in the religion C.D scored higher than CON.D.

Variables	Personality Factors				
	N	E	O	A	C
Problem Solving	-.01	.17	.11	-.06	.21
Distraction positive	-.17	.01	-.11	.03	.02
Distraction negative	-.34	.18	.55	-.53	-.55
Acceptance / Redefinition	.41	-.07	.01	.08	.19
Religion /Faith	.28	-.04	-.60**	.37	.17
Denial/Blame	.09	-.09	-.04	.15	-.06
Social Support	-.15	.14	-.20	.10	.27

* P<0.05 (Significant beyond 0.05 level).

** P<0.01(Significant beyond 0.01 level).

Table 4: Showing Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation (r) between personality factors and coping strategies of the Classical dances group.

Above table describes the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation between personality factors and coping strategies of the Classical dance group. The result also suggests a significantly negative extent of association exists between openness and religion/faith.

Variables	Personality Factors				
	N	E	O	A	C
Problem Solving	.24	-.26	-.02	.23	.50
Distraction positive	-.18	-.09	-.15	-.39	-.12
Distraction negative	-.30	.23	.05	-.01	.08
Acceptance / Redefinition	-.34	-.04	.14	.17	.16
Religion /Faith	-.28	.38	.27	.06	.02
Denial/Blame	.31	.29	.11	.36*	-.18
Social Support	-.03	.02	-.45**	.05	.11

* P<0.05 (Significant beyond 0.05 level).

** P<0.01(Significant beyond 0.01 level).

Table 5: Showing Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation (r) between personality factors and coping strategies of the Contemporary dances group.

Above table describes the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation between personality factors and coping strategies of the contemporary dance group. The result suggests that significant positive association exists between agreeableness and denial/blame. The result also suggests a significant negative extent of association exists between openness and social support.

Discussion

It reveals that Indian classical dancers (Bharatanatyam Dancers) and contemporary dancers differ significantly on extraversion dimension of the personality. It indicates contemporary dancers are outgoing, talkative and curious to newness. On the other hand, classical dancers are reserved and prefer to mix up with selected persons. These findings may be linked to the dance forms with which they are attached. The Indian classical dancers (Bharatanatyam Dancers) follow rigid, traditional dance rules and systems for a long time and they are not allowed to change the dance form and style freely. On the contrary, contemporary dancers are more free to improvise their

imagination to innovative dance steps. In the Contemporary dance form rigid rules are minimal and or completely absent (Scheff et al., 2010). Thus, different styles of dance forms may influence the personality patterns of the dancers.

Present study shows openness is higher in contemporary dancers rather than classical dancers. Not only that in case of Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers), a significant negative relationship is perceived between the religion/faith and openness. As Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers) follow the traditional rules and regulations of the dance style, so rigid and orthodox rules of dance may deprive openness that results in the empirical and down to earth nature of the classical dancers. Alternatively, contemporary dancers are more free to use their imagination, open to express their inner feelings, and to take decisions independently.

It has been revealed that Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers) scored higher on agreeableness dimension of personality and also on social support coping strategy of Coping Checklist II than contemporary dancers. Here it can be said that Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers) are more sympathetic, helpful and they seek social support to combat with their stress than the contemporary dancers.

Present study reveals that Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers) and contemporary dancers differ significantly on the conscientiousness dimension of the personality factor. This finding may be linked to the dance form which may influence their personality pattern. It indicates Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers) are more perfectionists and self-controlled because they practice the core discipline of dance and wait for a long time to achieve the perfect level. On the other hand, contemporary dancers are more easy going. They do not have any kind of rigorous systematic method and for this reason, their perfectionist trait may be lower than the Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers). The research work of Bhattacharya and Lihala (2015) shows that professional Bharatnatyam dancers showed higher levels of organization, strived for excellence and conscientious perfectionism.

The result shows that there is a significant difference between Indian classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers) and contemporary dancers on the acceptance sub-scale of the coping strategies. Thus it can be said that contemporary dancers have greater opportunities to deal with stressful events in a more practical way as their dance form is not bound to follow rigid rules. Indian classical dance is a traditional form of dance. The dancers follow rigid, traditional dance rules in their dance practice (Schechener, 2010). For this reason may be the acceptance coping strategy exists more in Contemporary dancers rather than Indian Classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers).

It has been found that rather than contemporary dances, Indian Classical dancers (Bharatnatyam Dancers) more use religion (as revealed on CC-II) which is an emotional focused coping strategy. A research done by Barrel (1999) also revealed that the classical ballet dancers use more emotional focused coping strategies, because they experience more frustration when they fail to achieve their ideal goals which they cannot not accept easily. In this case, the maximum dance songs of Indian Classical Dance are based on mythological stories. It creates reliance on religion from a very early time and they may seek spiritual support in their hard time.

It is important to note that the contemporary dance form is a modern form of dance and the dancers do not nourish traditional and societal culture by following the traditional rules like the India Classical dancers. Consequently they are less appreciated than the Indian Classical dancers may be for this reason, they may not try to seek help from the society and a negative relationship is found from this study between openness and social support in case of contemporary dancers. Similarly, Taylor & Taylor's (1995) also revealed, as contemporary dance form is an innovative dance form they may feel pressure from the society rather than perceiving support. The result also shows that in some cases differences have been observed between dance groups and controlled groups.

Conclusion

Thus it may conclude that there is a significant difference in terms of the nature of personality pattern and coping strategies between the three groups namely Indian classical dance group (Bharatnatyam dancers), contemporary dance group and control group participants.

Implication

Now-a-days dance has a good impact on the society. Parents indulge their children to dance from very young age. The principal implication of this study is how the psychological aspects depend on different form of dance. This study may help to find out how does the personality factor and coping strategy create difference between the Indian classical dancers (Bharatanatyam Dancers) and contemporary dancers. The study findings further have given us a clear picture regarding psychological point of view on dance.

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