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Body Dissatisfaction Among Ballet Dancers

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INTRODUCTION

Athletes are required to maintain a healthy and strong physique, however they can experience pressure to look a specific way. Certain types of sports promote a thin body image which athletes are insisted to follow. As a result of this, there is a trend often seen in female athletes and body dissatisfaction because of the sociocultural and sports community pressure. Body dissatisfaction is the negative subjective evaluation of the weight and shape of one's own body.¹ The level of body dissatisfaction a female athlete can experience varies among the type of sport they participate in. Studies show that female athletes that are in sports such as dancing or gymnastics reported high levels of body dissatisfaction compared to athletes in ball sports like basketball or soccer.²

There is a parallel among female athletes and dancers with body dissatisfaction. Similar to athletes, different types of dance have specific physical appearance aesthetics that dancers have to follow as well. In the college and professional ballet dance community, the emphasis to be thin is a highlighted aesthetic. Despite the need to have a small figure, however, female ballet dancers are expected to have extreme muscle strength too. Therefore, because they are already pressured to look a specific way in the dance community as well as having to deal with fitting in society as a female, all of this can affect their self-esteem.³ Low self-esteem can have an effect on a dancer's body dissatisfaction, but there are other factors that can increase this dissatisfaction. Once we have measured the body dissatisfaction, we have find the adequate coping mechanisms that will decrease body dissatisfaction among this population. This study aims to find ways to decrease body dissatisfaction in ballet dancers with the use of coping mechanisms that help maintain a positive self-esteem.

In an athletic and dance community coaches play a vital role by helping athletes to maintain a healthy weight, body image, and diet especially in female athletes.⁴ Because coaches strongly influence the self-perception, performance, self-confidence, and motivation of the athlete, they share a close relationship with them too. Although coaches try to help in positive ways, their pressure can affect the female athlete's perception of weight management. This is often triggered not only by the way coaches discuss these topics but by the way athletes internalize and use their self-perception.⁴ The self-perception of a ballet dancer matters because it can have a positive or negative impact on their performance and overall outlook of themselves. In an interview with Marina Hotchkiss, the LINES Ballet BFA Program Director at Dominican University of California, she discusses how the students of this program are as affected by the self-perception of their technique and capacity. These concerns combined with their perception of their physical shape are what Marina defines body dissatisfaction is in the LINES ballet program. Studies have found that self-perception and efficacy impact body image and that individuals with lower efficacy are prone to social anxiety and low self-esteem.³ Numerous studies have discovered the association to body dissatisfaction but not enough have found strategies to decrease it. By gathering data from programs such as LINES Ballet at Dominican University, San Jose State University and other Bay Area Dance programs, the study's objective is to define and measure the body dissatisfaction and create constructive options of coping mechanism that will positively affect ballet dancers.

METHODS

Participants

This study has been approved by IRB. Consent forms were attached to emails and sent out to interview participants who signed this prior to the interview. Questionnaire participants implied consent by completing the survey.

Having a target population consisted of ballet dancers can help us find similarities in the measurement of body dissatisfaction that is found also in female athletes. One of this study's targets measuring the body dissatisfaction among ballet dancers in the Bay Area. Therefore, this study is a convenience sample involving female ballet dance students between the ages of 18-25. Interview participants were recruited from the LINES ballet program at Dominican University of California or dance majors from all over the Bay Area. The LINES Ballet Program at Dominican University of California is four-year Bachelor of Fine Arts program that combines extensive training in modern and other forms of dance with liberal arts education. At Dominican there are 35 female students in the LINES ballet program and I recruited 7 female out of the 35 participants. The 4 other female participants were from other colleges in the Bay Area.

In order to get a broader perspective, this research utilized a questionnaire. The target population for this questionnaire consisted of only female dancers. Interviewees received links to the questionnaire to share with friends and other eligible participants in the target population. Flyers were posted on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with a description of the study and contact information. Individuals filled out a questionnaire via Survey Monkey and shared the link with their peers and acquaintances. Eligibility criteria is the same for these participants: female, age 18-25, and a current dance major enrolled in college.

Procedure

The interview sample population was recruited from Dominican University and other colleges in the Bay Area. Interviews were conducted on campus at Dominican University or through video call. For example, on-campus interviews took place in a private area like the library lobby or an empty classroom. Interviews were one-on-one, scheduled, and conducted at the participants convenience. Data was collected, recorded, and transcribed. With permission from participants, all interviews were recorded. Before the interview process begun, participants completed the questionnaire. Interview process average time was between 15-20 minutes. Questionnaire was on Survey Monkey. Questionnaire process took an average time of two minutes.

Measures/Materials

In this study, we are measuring body dissatisfaction in our target population and using the data to find coping mechanisms to decrease dissatisfaction. The exposure is body dissatisfaction and we are using two scales to measure this. The first scale is the Body Esteem Scale (BES) for Adolescents and Adults⁵ contains 19 interview questions. Participants were asked questions about how they feel about their appearance, attribution, and weight. Items are based on a 5-point scale to indicate the frequency of agreement to each question (0) = never, (1) = seldom, (2) = sometimes, (3) = often, and (4) = always. Sample items include, “Do you feel satisfied with your weight?” and “Do your looks upset you?”. Higher scores on this scale indicate a low self-esteem. The BES has shown a test-retest reliability (r) for females to be high: appearance (r = 0.81), attribution (r = 0.75), and weight (r = 0.87). The BES is not susceptible to a tendency to deny

negative self-attributes, however, there is slight sensitivity of the scale to attribute positive traits to self. This tendency has been proven through other research and has shown to be associated with positive self-esteem.

The second scale is the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE)⁶. It is a questionnaire and provides 12 questions. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale that range from (0) = not at all characteristic of me to (4) = extremely characteristic of me. Sample items include “I am afraid that other people will find fault with me” or “I am concerned about other people’s opinions of me”. Higher scores on this scale indicates individuals have a high fear of being perceived negatively. The BFNE scale has shown a confirmatory factor analysis of 0.98.

The outcome of this study is coping mechanisms. This is measured by 9 interview questions about coping strategies.⁷ Even numbered questions suggest constructive coping strategies while odd numbered questions suggest less constructive coping strategies. Sample items include “When you’re feeling stressed, do you ever use social media/TV/music to help you relax?” or “What other hobbies or activities help you relax?”. High scores on the low numbered items indicate the higher use of less constructive coping strategies.

This study identifies ballet dancer’s self-perception of their self-esteem, body esteem, and weight and we use this to measure their body dissatisfaction. However, there can be other factors that affect their body dissatisfaction that we have not measured for. Pressure from the community has an effect on the dancer’s body dissatisfaction and to measure this we would have to interview faculty and teachers who work with ballet students.

Quantitative data was analyzed. Qualitative data was transcribed. Data was analyzed by content and thematic analysis.

RESULTS

After conducting our research, we had a total of 11 completed interviews and questionnaires. Interviews averaged to be about 17 minutes long. Questionnaires took about two minutes to complete. All participants were women. Seven out of the 11 participants were from Dominican University of California, and the other four were from San Jose State University and San Francisco State University.

The 14 body esteem scale interview questions are divided into three sections: perception of their looks, perception of their attributes, and perception of weight. Following the data analysis, two common themes were found in each section set of the interview questions (Table 1). The first section of the interview focuses on determining the interviewee's perception of their looks. Example of questions include: "Do you feel like there are lots of things you'd change about your looks if you could? If yes, what would you change and why?" and "Do you like what you see when you look in the mirror? Are you happy about the way you look?" In this section, the two main themes researchers found were body/ballet aesthetic and genetics. Section two, perceptions of their attributes, involved questions such as, "Are you proud of your body?" and "Do you think people your own age like your looks?" The themes established in this section was social media and setting expectations. Lastly, the third section about perceptions of weight, focused on questions like "Are you preoccupied with trying to change your body weight?" and "Do you feel like you weigh the right amount for your height?" Main themes in this section were about weight and adolescence. Each theme that is presented in our results is a factor leading to body dissatisfaction.

Table 1. Interview Questions and Themes

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Interview Question</u> | <u>Theme(s)</u> |
|--|---|---|
| Perception of their looks | <p>Do you ever wish that you looked like someone else? If, yes like who and why?</p> <p>Do your looks ever upset you?</p> <p>Do you feel like there are lots of things you'd change about your looks if you could? If yes, what would you change and why?</p> <p>Do you ever feel ashamed of how you look?</p> <p>Do you worry about the way you look?</p> <p>Do you like what you see when you look in the mirror? Are you happy about the way you look?</p> | <u>Body/Ballet Aesthetic</u> and <u>Genetics</u> |
| Perception of how other people think they perceive them (Attributes) | <p>Do you think you have a good body?</p> <p>Are you proud of your body?</p> <p>Do you think you looks help you get dates?</p> <p>Do you think people your own age like your looks?</p> | <u>Social Media</u> and <u>Setting Expectations</u> |
| Perceptions of weight | <p>Do you feel satisfied with your weight?</p> <p>Are you preoccupied with trying to change your body weight?</p> <p>When you weighing yourself, does it depress you or make you feel sad?</p> <p>Do you feel like you weigh the right amount for your height?</p> | <u>Weight</u> and <u>Adolescent</u> |

Body and ballet aesthetics. Stereotypes and ballet aesthetic are the leading cause of body dissatisfaction. Dancers need to acquire the muscle strength to carry themselves and be flexible while at the same time maintaining the proper figure and “look the part” as a ballerina. Participants expressed their opinions on the effects of these stereotypes and their perceptions of body image and body esteem. All participants agreed to say that they were unhappy about certain aspects of their body. If they had the opportunity they wanted to change these aspects to fit the aesthetic of a ballet dancer, for example, having smaller thighs and hips. Keywords like slim and skinny were a common response when asked about stereotypes of ballet dancers. One participant reported: “Yeah definitely, I think I would be lying if I didn’t come to class, like every day walking in, I see someone who’s slim and slender and say like wow I wish I looked like that.” This pressure participants felt to look a certain way relates to the idea that ballet dancers, who looked slim and skinny, were recognized and rewarded more than those who did not appear to be slim and skinny. Another participant indicated that the reason why they desired to change certain body parts is because dancers with the body aesthetic were recognized more and considered more acceptable. One participant said:

“I (would change parts of my body because) I think like dancers with really long legs and who are really skinny, don't have a butt and don't have boobs get rewarded for their body. And I used to be so so like (in this mentality) this but then coming into this program seeing all the different bodies being so successful and so like amazing and dance has helped me transition from that mindset.”

Although participants admitted to wanting to change their bodies, they did not express a form of self-hate or anger on themselves for their bodies but more of disappointment and discouragement. This participant stated: “(Do your looks ever upset you?) Sometimes they do discourage me which then leads to me being less confident, but I don't think I ever get angry

about it.” Several participants mentioned that in the ballet world they spend most of their time in front of a mirror so they are more vulnerable to body dissatisfaction. One interviewee stated:

“In a comparative fashion in the sense that I stand in front of a mirror for most of my classes and usually tight fitting clothing, so you see everything all of the time which can sometimes be discouraging especially when you're standing next to other people in a classroom who might have a better figure or different physical attributes than you have.”

Each participant voiced their dissatisfaction experience and the influence of ballet aesthetic heavily affects this.

Genetics. Another common theme that affects a dancer’s body image and body esteem is genetics. Through exercising and healthy dieting, dancers can sculpt their bodies but genes play a part as well on how their bodies develop over time. Participants of the Southeast Asian descent, mainly Filipino, said that because of their genetics they have more of a pear-shaped figure and it “ran in the family”. One interviewee talked about their insecurities with their thighs: “Where I wish my thighs aren't huge because as a Filipina woman and genetically, I wasn't born to be skinny thighs.” Other Filipino participants admitted to their insecurities of being a bigger proportion from the waist down, specifically in their legs, hips, and thighs. These insecurities affect their perception of themselves and overall performance in the dance studio. Genetics not only affect body shapes, they can alter a dancer’s metabolism, how fast or slow their body can break down food molecules. Culture also can have an effect on the way dancers perceive and deal with the different pressures. The same participants mentioned that because they grow up in a Filipino family, it is culturally more competitive and not as positively supportive. “It’s still hard for me to look in the mirror and say damn girl you look good because as women we were premeditated to just not say that, especially in our culture.”

Social Media. Social media is the second theme of section two. Participants felt that social media played a big factor into body esteem. They talked about how comparing body

shapes and sizes does not stop in the dance class but online as well. “It has to do with this social media era right now and it kind of makes you start to compare. You start to compare because everything is so accessible and everyone vlogs and posts about their outfits and when you’re not in a good place, where you keep comparing yourself to people” Another dancer talked about people on social media who photoshop their pictures and that that can affect one’s perception of their own body image. “There's like a lot of comparison but I would say that's with more like Instagram like pressures because, pictures are kind of funny and like you can tweak them to how you want to look like, yeah I mean you can twist your body a certain way or whatever and like you look how you want to look” Participants were aware of how social media is a negative coping mechanism and source of pessimistic energy. “You have to realize it's a everything you see on Instagram even Facebook even Twitter is still like a. Curated way of how they even perceive themselves.”

Setting Expectations. This theme is crucial because it determines how well participants handle their insecurities when they arise. As mentioned earlier, despite battling their insecurities our participants did not hate their bodies or express any low self-esteem. They learned how to change their mindset and lower expectations of themselves, focus on their own opinions about their body and appreciate the good aspects of their body. Participants described their strategies of how they look past the adversities in the dance community and social media. One way that a participant said they get rid of the worry and doubt about what other people say about them is to focus on what they think of themselves. “I think about myself rather than what others think other people’s think and how I’m kind of a worst critic.” Setting expectations, as an interviewee mentioned, played a big part in learning to accept and be satisfied with their body. “ It's taught me like a hard lesson to not be okay and to be okay with (the fact that) things are going the way

they planned or having an alternative plan and being ok with things failing. That's fine.” In response to the questions about their perception of attribute, participants talked about how their friends and classmates perceived them they have a good dancer body. This would eliminate the theory of this study that there are pressures around these dancers increasing body dissatisfaction.

Weight. We found that participants who experienced higher dissatisfaction when they were younger cared more about their weight then than now. This is linked to the next theme adolescence because we found that greater dissatisfaction was experienced during puberty stages. Nine of the 11 participants said that they do not even own a scale in their dorm or apartment.

Adolescence. This last theme is important because adolescence is the time in which our study population developed their body dissatisfaction. Half of our participants described their difficult in dealing with past experiences in high school and dance programs. Puberty stages also vary on the person, some develop sooner than others and in many different aspects of the body like height and body frame. After analyzing this theme, researchers developed recommendations to prevent the dissatisfaction. In order to prevent or decrease body dissatisfaction at a young age, we can implement intervention programs to educate dancers on healthy eating, exercising, and mental health.

Questionnaire. Based on the data, researchers found that among our study population their perceived fear of negative evaluation is moderate to high. The highest score out of the 11 participants was a 38 and the average score was a 30. This means that participants are afraid to be perceived by others negatively. Their scores reflect and support their responses to section two of the interview portion, perception of their attributes. Because the scores are relatively high and that means they fear other people’s opinion about them, participants mentioned that they are still in the process of accepting and learning not to focus on other opinions.

Table 2. Questionnaire Results _____

This data represents the results from the questionnaire. Results score for each participant is presented as well as the average score. _____

| Participant ID | Results Score (Sum) |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 25 |
| 2 | 30 |
| 3 | 37.5 |
| 4 | 34 |
| 5 | 27 |
| 6 | 37 |
| 7 | 38 |
| 8 | 35 |
| 9 | 17 |
| 10 | 20 |
| 11 | 31 |
| Average Score: | 30 |

DISCUSSION

Based on our findings, body dissatisfaction among college students is not as prevalent as it is during the adolescent stage, specifically during high school. Participants use effective coping mechanisms such as, creative writing, exercising, and dancing to decrease their dissatisfaction. Early intervention is also suggested to prevent from body dissatisfaction worsening.

As mentioned, from section one of the interview questions our themes were ballet aesthetic and genetics. Both themes are linked to increasing dissatisfaction in female athletes and dancers. Unlike female basketball athletes, who do not have to follow a stereotyped body image, gymnasts and ballet dancers are constantly pressured to follow the ballet aesthetic of having a slim and tall figure. What researchers have found is that because of this pressure, ballet dancers are more critical and strict on themselves to mold into the ballet aesthetic, which leads to the increase of dissatisfaction if they cannot achieve the “perfect ballet dancer body”. The drawback that participants mentioned that may have hindered them from achieving this aesthetic was because of their genes. Dancers already struggling to acquire and maintain the strength needed but it is also difficult to control how much muscle these dancers can gain. They become conflicted on whether they should exercise less or eat more and this adds to their insecurities of having a bigger butt, thighs or hips. The hardest part of exercising while maintaining the desirable figure is that muscle makes you appear more larger and “bulk” than the normal stereotyped ballerina figure. Not only can muscle strength affect dancers but genetics plays a part as well. Genes can affect the way the body forms, therefore sometimes ballet dancers do not have control over how their body shape develops. Dancers can do only as little as diet and exercise to be in the right shape but that oftentimes is not enough.

Social media, our third theme, plays a role as both a positive and negative coping mechanism. Positive aspects of social media allow for these dancers to get inspiration for choreography from other influencers or celebrity dancers. Certain social media platforms like Youtube are another form of TV and music coping strategies and stress relief. Although, the negatives outweigh the positives. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter create a space for dancers to have more insecurities and compare themselves to others who show and reflect the “perfect model body”. Sometimes, the pictures seen on Instagram are often “facetuned” or photoshopped and dancers increase their body dissatisfaction because of this comparison of themselves to false and counterfeit ideals. This not only affects dancers, however, but other non-dancers who have social media, which is why social media can be detrimental to our society’s mental health and how we perceive ourselves. Social media content is not only dancing, but it promotes other kinds of interests like fashion, food, and exercising. Therefore, other viewers and users who are inspired by content that is fabricated can also be negatively affected. This is why it is highly recommended to avoid using social media as a coping mechanism. But it is important to remind people who experience dissatisfaction that people on social media who constantly post about their lives are only posting their accomplishments and never their shortcomings or imperfections. This leads us to another theme which was setting expectations. Participants knew that people’s opinion of them did not define how good or bad they physically and in the dance studio. Reminding themselves that in order to decrease their insecurities, learning and accepting that not everyone will like the way you look is okay and as long as they are comfortable and confident in their own skin, that is what matters the most.

The last themes mentioned in our results were weight and adolescence. These themes go hand in hand and are major factors contributing to body dissatisfaction. During the interview

process, participants discussed their past experiences and insecurities with weight issues. Weighing themselves became an obsession and unhealthy habit because weight fluctuates. In their adolescent stages, this played an important role on their mental health. Although, they eventually removed the notion that weighing a certain amount means that you are healthy. One interview question asked, “Do you feel like you weigh the right amount for your height?” and most respondents said that they know they do not weigh the right amount for their height but it did not matter as much to them as long as they perceived themselves as fit and healthy. Now, experiencing less body dissatisfaction, these participants no longer track or care about their weight. Body image has a greater impact on dancers mental health than a number on a scale. This brings us to the second theme in this category, adolescence. Body image and body esteem during the adolescent years are important because during these stages the body goes through drastic changes. Females tend to develop more in the regions such as the chest, hips, butt, and thighs. These regions of the body happen to also be the biggest insecurities among this study population. Similar to what was mentioned in the theme of genetics, dancers do not have much control over how their bodies develop as well. Like weight, the body shape changes over time due to many other contributing factors such as diet. Therefore, body dissatisfaction in these stages are greater experienced compared to the young adult years.

The questionnaire results, unfortunately, insufficiently supported what was discussed in section two of the interview. Although, researchers found that participants did not display as much dissatisfaction in their perception of their attributes, the questionnaire results showed differently. In the interview portion, participants discussed how they were oblivious to people in their age range appreciating their body, looks, and attributes. They were told by friends that they

had a good ballet dancer body, but they did not mention any comments about being perceived negatively.

Half of the study population that scored around 25-35 were participants who, in the interview, stated that if they were feeling insecure they would not seek out for comfort or support and if they were in a situation in which they did not have much control over, they would not be able to accept it. With the second statement about control, the interviewees were confused about what the question was asking so the interviewer provided an example. Interviewees were told to think of a situation in which their dance instructor forms a negative opinion about their performance, yet they have been practicing the dance piece several amount of times, and they receive the same kind of feedback from their instructor. This is a situation in which they do not have much control over how the instructor perceives their performance and every participant said that it was difficult to accept situations similar to this when they cannot control the person's perception of them.

There were a few biases in this study. First bias in this study is selection bias. When researchers were recruiting for interviewees, the first group of participants were from the LINES ballet program. The snowball effect was used to recruit more participants, however, those who were referred to be recruited were individuals who were or had experienced dissatisfaction. This creates bias because although this study was trying to measure body dissatisfaction within the program, recruiting participants who had it ensures our study population will have body dissatisfaction. Another bias in our study was interviewer bias. In the beginning steps of the interviewing process, our interviewer gave a summary of what the questions will entail and what the focus of the study is. In that process, the interviewer may have influenced the way interviewees responded to each question. It was clear to participants that the objective of this

study was to discuss body dissatisfaction. However, there may have been instances of bias in which a participant felt the need to discuss personal body esteem issues because of the subject of this study.

After trying to measure body dissatisfaction in the LINES ballet program, I was surprised to see that it did not occur as much as I expected. Participants talked about their experiences with their body dissatisfaction before coming into college and the program. In comparison to other dance schools and programs they have participated in, the LINES program is more accepting of body diversity. All different kinds of body types were celebrated in this program, therefore, most of the participants felt little to no pressure from their peers or instructors. The pressure and dissatisfaction roots from the dancer's own insecurities and past experiences during their adolescent stages. This can explain why the experienced dissatisfaction is higher throughout high school than now in college. Most dancers that were interviewed came from strict and harsh dance communities before coming to Dominican and they all shared their stories of difficulties in dealing with the body changes during puberty and having to build the right body aesthetic for ballet at the same time. The only dissatisfaction these dancers experience similar to their past communities that they still experience being in LINES is technique. Dancers not only train to become stronger but to enhance their flexibility and technique. Technique is a complicated category because it is not something you can just learn and execute well, you have to practice and commit to have perfect technique, but if you struggle to get the right technique it falls within the dissatisfaction.

As part of our findings, there are multiple ways to decrease body dissatisfaction among this population. There are different kinds of healthy coping mechanisms listed that can be used, but the most effective recommendation would be early intervention. Intervention with ballet

dancers at a younger age can target the dissatisfaction they encounter at its peak, which is during the adolescent age. The best way this could be implemented is through dance schools, academies, and after school programs that would provide educational programs. These programs would teach dancers about proper nutrition, exercise, and mental health. For example, proper nutrition, would involve meal plans, healthy eating tips and behaviors. Every dancer has a different appetite and eating behavior so these programs would also help cater to multiple kinds of diets and based on what the dancer prefer to eat. A study showed that learning, understanding and applying nutritional knowledge increased with aged and that dancers become more aware of healthy eating habits as they past puberty.⁸ The female body changes very often throughout puberty and reaches sometimes until college. Participants agreed that in the first year of college it is hard to adjust eating habits and meals because of the food choices on and off campus. Teaching student dancers around the highschool age can be helpful by allowing them to carry these habits into college.

One coping mechanism that was not mentioned or recommended but surprised me in the findings was alcohol use. There is a trend found in juniors and seniors that were interviewed; they explained that alcohol and social gatherings are a coping mechanism they find effective for them. However, in our interview scale, the question involving alcohol use is categorized as a negative coping mechanism. Although, participants emphasized the amount of times they would result to alcohol use to relieve stress, which is roughly estimated to be two or three times a month. This coping mechanism is not recommended, but it is stated in our research because that is based on our findings.

After reading through the literature, there are many studies that looked at the link between anxiety, pressure, and stereotypes with eating disorders and body dissatisfaction.⁹

However, in this study we were able to detect where the dissatisfaction starts and with those findings recommend solutions to prevent increases in body dissatisfaction.

Even though we were able to bridge that gap, this study does have a few limitations and strengths. Limitations of this study included a small study population. To strengthen and make our study more reliable, if researchers were allotted a couple more months to conduct further research, we could also expand our target population to professional dancers. Dissatisfaction could also be measured in men, so again if researchers had more time, men would be eligible to participate in the study. One other limitation is that LINES ballet participants did not display as much body dissatisfaction that could be measurable. But this study is still able to find effective coping mechanisms as one of its strengths. These coping mechanisms can be recommended to not just ballet dancers, but dancers of other kinds of genres and female athletes who experience body dissatisfaction. This study also found a way to prevent dissatisfaction in the younger populations. Overall, despite the lack of participation and measurement in body dissatisfaction in our study population, this study's findings provide recommendations to decrease and possibly prevent body dissatisfaction.

If our researchers were given extra time to do further research into this topic, our study population would be expanded to males and professional ballet dancers as well. There are not many studies done on male ballet dancers and the measure of body dissatisfaction, so this could be another bridging gap in the study. We have seen in the results that body dissatisfaction varies with age and it would make this study more reliable if we were able to measure dissatisfaction among professional ballet dancers. If we were to expand the population further than ballet, we would measure dissatisfaction in other styles of dance such as jazz, contemporary, and hip hop.

These styles are not as prevalent with dissatisfaction and there little to no studies done on these styles, therefore this could be a second gap in the study.

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