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A Study on Body Image Perceived by Female University Students Majoring Dance in Korea

Kim Ji-Young^a, Park Hyun-Jung^{b*}, Joo Hyung-Chul^c, Park In-Sil^d

^a Sangmyung University, 31 Sangmyungdae-gil, Dongnam-gu, Cheonan, 330-720, Korea

^b Korea National University of Arts, 146-37 Hwarang-ro 32-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul, 136-716, Korea

^c Catholic Kwandong University, 24 Beomil-ro 579 beon-gil, Gangneung, 210-701, Korea

^d Yonsei University, 50 Yonsei-ro, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, 120-749, Korea

Abstract

This study intends to identify the differences in perceived body images depending on dance genres and to analyze the causes. A total 798 female university students majoring dance were selected. Using the SPSS program, the ANOVA about each variable was. The results of this study are as follows: The body images perceived by female university students by dance genre, the Korean traditional dance-majoring students had the most positive body image. That can be discussed with three reasons. First, the Korean traditional dance costume doesn't expose or reveal the body of dancer wearing it. Second reason is the differences in dances' techniques. Third reason can be inferred from oriental traditional thought and philosophy.

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1. Introduction

Here in Korean society, the trend considering the slender body as the ideal body type is significantly appeared due to the prosperity of diet culture. This trend ultimately becomes a serious social pathological phenomenon beyond simply individual's problem. The subjective image, judgment and attitude of all physical figures, including condition,

* Park Hyun-Jung. Tel.: +82-2-746-9594; fax: +82-2-746-9599

E-mail address: hj9405@gmail.com

appearance, function, stamina and health status related with one's body, form the body image of individual (Norris, 1978). This body image is formed by the complex action of one's belief, value, objective, personality and the other's opinion of the individual, and is greatly influenced socioculturally (Fujita, 1972; Rubin, 1968; Wassner, 1982). It is also an important element affecting the individual's physical and psychological wellbeing (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002). In particular, women shows more negative tendency in perception of their body image than men. It is reported that women who are actually normal but think them obese give themselves lower marks related with their appearance in evaluation of body image than women who are actually obese (Cash & Hicks, 1990).

As for the dance majors who emphasize aesthetic expressiveness of body, dissatisfaction at their body image and its negative influence are more severe. As dancer's body type is as core as it can be described as strategy, it is very important to understand the process of body image forming and tendency. However, most of the studies on body image and dance focus on how the exaggerated and dominated ideal and prejudiced standard of thinness are made in dance environment (Lee & Park, 2007; Hwang, 2005). These viewpoints also led to the attention to how feeding disturbance and distorted image of body (Kim, 2007; Kim & Park, 2007) appeared among dancers. Thomson & Heinberd (1999) reported in their study, dance majors suffered from side effect such as neuropathy including feeding disturbance due to the obsession with excessively thin body type. Park, Lim, and Lee (2014) also found out in their study recently, negative body image of dance majors is a factor affecting their habit of binge. To put it concretely, they consider thinner body type than their present body as ideal, which is statistically significantly different on gender. It is identified body image is a significant factor explaining emotion and weight, subfactors of binge habit. Like this, it is found that as dance majors perceive excessively thin figure as the ideal body image, they have a body image different from their real one.

In some comparative studies comparing the people majoring the dance with the people not majoring the subject, it was revealed that the female university students majoring the dance had negative images about their bodies comparing to ones not majoring the subject (Na, Park, & Kim, 2011). The way of artistic beauty and dynamic expression in dance makes dancers aim for beautiful and well-shaped body more and more, and makes them perceive it as a tool and medium for professional expression technique. Interestingly, the influence of dance participant's body image was different according to dance type and characteristics (Downey, Reel, Soohoo, & Zerbib, 2010). Even though body is an important object and means for dancers' aesthetic expression and showy movement, the normal standard cannot be defined as that it is limited to extreme physical condition or ideal or has the absolute value. That is to say, it can pursue the physical ideal of the same way or can take a different viewpoint of open body image.

46 universities in Korea have the department of dance. These universities produce dance majors based on three genres such as Korean traditional dance, ballet and modern dance, according to classification standards that Korean higher educational institutions use. Accordingly, this study will consider as body image what dance majors in Korea evaluate and think their own body image of their appearance, body type, health and strength that they subjectively perceive, and will compare these. This study tried to show the differences of body image perceived by dance genre in detail and to analyze its cause.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants of this research are female college students majoring in dance at 10 universities among 46 Korean universities with dance department. A total of 798 female college students majoring in dance at dance department of 10 universities in the country were selected by cluster random sampling. Their average height is 163.70cm and average weight is 50.39kg; and their detailed majors are distributed in the order of Korean traditional dance of 299 majors(37.5%), ballet of 283(35.5%), and modern dance 216(27.1%). As for the period of dance experience, 10-15 years occupied most with 317 majors(39.7%), followed by 5-10 years, more than 15 years and less than 5 years, in order.

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